October, 1939 Vol. XVI. No. 4

THE CROZER QUARTERLY

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THE CROZER QUARTERLY

THE CROZER QUARTERLY is published by the Faculty of Crozer Theological Seminary, with the aid of funds provided by the Trustees. THE QUARTERLY aims to be a journal for the expression of theological opinion, embracing all the interests of students of religion, whether ministers, teachers, or laymen. It does not accept responsibility for the views expressed, publication indicating that the editors regard the articles as voicing opinions important enough to command attention.

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Subscription, $1.50 the year; single numbers, 40 cents

Printed for the Crozer Theological Seminary by
THE JUDSON PRESS
Philadelphia, Pa.

Entered as second-class matter, December 21, 1923, at the post-office at Chester, Pa., under Act of March 3, 1879.

Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized December 21, 1923.

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PRINTED IN U. S. A.

THE CROZER QUARTERLY

Vol. XVI OCTOBER, 1939 No. 4

NATURALISM FACES PROPHETIC RELIGION

WALTER G. MUELDER

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ROY WOOD SELLARS has recently stated that the most fundamental problem confronting religion today is this: "Can religion adjust itself to naturalism?"[1] Adjust is a word laden with ambiguity. The above proposition might be taken to mean that all religious data must be interpreted within the framework of naturalistic presuppositions. The statement may mean that what is valid in religion must be harmonious with "physical realism." Perhaps the following disjunction is intended: Either the religion of the future will be a "function" of naturalistic philosophy, or religion will decline more and more from now on—at least for truly philosophical minds. However, not all truly philosophical minds are naturalistic, and therefore it may be relevant to reverse the question as follows: Can naturalism "adjust" itself to prophetic religion? The reason that the adjective prophetic is employed is to emphasize the element of social justice in religion, which is the element most closely related to the social idealism of many naturalists.

The two basic concepts in religion are personality and value. Can naturalism do justice to these concepts, as they reveal themselves in prophetic religious experience, within the frames of reference of natural science, social behaviorism, and non-theistic social idealism?

What is prophetic religion? What is naturalism?[2] From the time of Amos prophetic religion has been an integral part of Judaic and Christian civilization. Concern for social righteousness within the nation and justice among the nations under the governance of God and his righteousness have been central in much Christian preaching. Since apostolic times there has, to be sure, been a fluctuating interest in the social gospel and in dynamic revolutionary salvation. But in periods of great social change there has always been a remnant that has resisted all priestly accommodation to the status quo and all cheap escapes into

[1] "Religion Faces Naturalism," *Religion in Life*, Autumn, 1937.

[2] Naturalism as below defined does not include the theistic mystical naturalism of Wieman and his group; neither does it include the position of J. B. Pratt as recently stated in the Yale Lectures.

a nonsocial religion from the real struggles and needs of the common people. The remnant has recognized that the church and all secular institutions stand under the judgment of God. There have always been those who have sustained the creative ethical monotheism of the eighth-century prophets and Jesus, in the face of exploitation, war and secularism of every kind. Today, also, in America and in the ecumenical gatherings of world Christians, one finds prophets who view history through religious categories and who are committed to the inescapable demands of Christ upon history. In the presence of more-than-human values they work together with God to reconcile the world to him. Such is prophetic religion in general terms.

From a more philosophical standpoint we may say that prophetic religion is an attitude in which theism leads to radical applications in personal and social relationships. Analysis reveals at least the following elements in the faith of prophetic theism: (1) a personal divine will taking active part in human history; (2) a holy will which is the source of all moral and spiritual values, and of human personality; (3) a divine command recognized by the human will to find the central meaningfulness of life in a righteous fellowship of men committed to God; (4) recognition of the unique selfhood and sacredness of individual personality; (5) freedom to decide in favor of or to reject the religious demand; (6) radical positive action against evils which frustrate the coming of a righteous fellowship of men; (7) recognition of the natural justice of God as judge of the conventional justice of man; and (8) awareness of the instrumental nature of all social institutions.

There are some religious prophets who do not embrace a full personal theism. And yet, their actions naturally lead to an affirmation of such a philosophical faith. The objectivity of ideals which they affirm requires for its concrete interpretation a purposive divine intelligence who acts creatively and redemptively in human history. Such men (Niebuhr, Wieman, Tillich) acknowledge an order of meaningfulness which either "transcends" present values, or demands complete "commitment," or calls for a "decision" to be loyal to the "center" of history. In each case a dynamic value-seeking order is implied which requires philosophically a divine holy will that is personal.

What is naturalism? It is difficult to find a clear-cut definition which will be inclusive enough to take in all the chaos and competition within the circle of those who call themselves naturalists. A few samples from a variety of writers may, however, point the way for a general definition. Sellars, in *Religion Coming of Age,*[3] writes:

[3] Page 141.

What, then, are the controlling principles of naturalism? Essentially those of science: the beliefs that nature is an all-inclusive, spatio-temporal system and that everything which exists and acts in it, is a part of this system. In short, naturalism is the expression of the desire for explanation in terms of objects which can be handled and studied in accordance with scientific methods.

Naturalism is, therefore, opposed to explanations in terms of superhuman agencies of a generally invisible and unlocalized sort. Ernest Nagel emphasizes the following point:

> To a naturalistic philosophy man occupies no central position in the flux of events. He is part of the flux, and in that sense nature would not be what it is if man were not what he is. . . There is no cosmic plan which aims at man's survival or at his achieving his ideals, for to his lot the universe is morally indifferent.[4]

Morris Cohen writes in a similar vein:

> From a naturalistic point of view the whole life of the human species is a minor episode in the history of a tiny speck of cosmic dust; and man's natural fate is determined by forces which visit death and destruction upon the just and the unjust.[5] I for one cannot see in history or in nature any rational proof of "a power not ourselves making for righteousness." [6]

In his new work on *Logic* John Dewey emphasizes especially two features which make his logic naturalistic:

> The primary postulate of a naturalistic theory of logic is continuity of the lower (less complex) and the higher (more complex) activities and forms. . . What is excluded by the postulate of continuity is the appearance upon the scene of a totally new outside force as a cause of changes that occur.

The second feature of naturalistic logic is this:

> Inquiry is a development of organic-environmental integration and interaction.[7]

For men like Edman, naturalism

> is really a faith in what man, himself an incident in natural processes, may do to render his existence rich with meaning and possibility through generous imagination and ingenious contrivance.[8]

As over against the elements of faith found in prophetic religion naturalism assumes, we may therefore say, (1) that science in general is our sole guide to knowledge; (2) that the "natural" order is all there

[4] Hook and Kallen, eds., *Philosophy Today and Tomorrow,* pp. 388-389.
[5] Adams and Montague, ed., *Contemporary American Philosophy,* Vol. I, p. 239f.
[6] *Ibid.,* p. 247.
[7] Page 23f. See also Chapter I.
[8] Hook and Kallen, eds., *op. cit.,* p. 152.

is; (3) that nature, apart from man, is indifferent to ideals; and (4) that the good life is nevertheless possible for man.

Though there is general affinity among naturalists on these four points, the conflict between so-called "half-hearted" and "broken-backed" naturalism has never been resolved. This issue refers to differences between Santayana and Dewey and their followers. On the one hand, the "half-hearted" bring the ends, aims, and values which man cherishes directly into nature. On the other hand are the "broken-backed," who tend to alienate man from nature because no place is found there for human values and ideals. Men otherwise as far apart as Russell and Edman stand with Santayana, while the New Humanist and the social revolutionary groups stand with Dewey. For these, nature gives some kind of undefined "support" to human striving and provides "possibilities" for social improvements, though nothing approaching a theistic principle is affirmed. Nevertheless, this social action group is closer to prophetic religion than the "broken-backed" naturalists. The latter find in life ultimately only an heroic despair or an escape into æsthetics.

Distinctive as theism and naturalism are, the terms are nevertheless not completely disjunctive. There are many phases of naturalism which are congenial to prophetic religion, inasmuch as they more adequately deal with personality and value than the older materialistic naturalism did. The tendency in modern philosophy has been for materialism to confine its philosophical tenets to the crude presuppositions of mechanical natural science. Reduction to physics has been the order of business. The tendency for idealistic and spiritualistic philosophies, on the other hand, has been to plead the cause for recognition of richer understandings of reality congenial to the highest aspirations of personality. Modern naturalism has developed methods and principles much more congruent with the demands of religious experience and the uniqueness of personal selfhood. In the following discussion we shall point out "adjustments" favorable to prophetic religion; after which we shall point critically to present lacks in the assumptions and doctrines of contemporary naturalism.

1. Rejection of reductionism. Reductionism means the identification of higher forms with lower forms of being of which they are supposed to be reorganizations. Art, religion, thought, and imagination are today affirmed, however, to be "functions" of nature, just as much as are breathing, digestion, and the movements of molecules and stars. A third of a century ago William James protested militantly against "medical materialism." Today most naturalists insist that they are not reductionists. They do not reduce all natural relations to physical relations—they say.

2. This shift from reductionism has partly come about through the general adoption of emergent evolution with its stress on the doctrine of levels and the unique quality of mind in man. Emergent evolution has tended toward a more organic conception of reality. The universe is approached as a whole of wholes. Lloyd Morgan himself has accepted the theistic interpretation of the emergence of mind, though others, like Sellars, still urge a non-theistic view.

3. Along with a recognition of the doctrine of levels has come a gradual awareness of some of the implications for philosophy of the presence of man in nature. The interpretation of nature is qualitatively affected by this fact. While some concede that the view of nature as a whole is involved, others stress the merely local significance of man's appearing.

4. A new appraisal of the significance of man in nature has influenced both scientific method in general and contemporary psychology in particular. There now exists a more critical attitude towards behaviorism in its Watsonian form and a readiness to attempt more independent work in the field of personality. Jung in clinical psychiatry and Gordon Allport in individual psychology have given securer foundations to the scientific studies of personality. Along with better work on personality has come a shift away from what might be called "scientific fundamentalism." A broader empirical method, unashamed of introspection, aware of purposive categories, open to other data than sense data, aware of the rôle of faith in knowledge, and more appreciative of the coherence criterion, has in part liberated some naturalists' investigations.

5. Another philosophical gain in the direction of a favorable handling of prophetic religion is growth in the use of historical categories. Scholars in all schools of thought tend today more and more to stress the reality of time. Indeed, more understanding of time in nature and history is indispensable to an adequate philosophy of religion. Formerly, naturalists tended to absorb or lose man in a non-temporal, undeveloping mechanical order of nature in which there was motion but no history. On the other hand, theists also thought unhistorically. They set non-temporal mechanical nature sharply over against history. Today, as a result of many influences—including Hegel, Marx, Bergson, Alexander, Dewey—the universe is viewed as a process genuinely temporal, developmental, and historical. But if the universe is genuinely evolutionary with a nisus towards mind, its real historicity and purposiveness in man require a proper recognition of the status of value in the cosmic process.

6. Naturalists, on the whole, reject with Sellars the objectivity of value. Some realists like Spaulding affirm the objectivity of value after

the manner of Plato. Some pragmatists imply it in so far as they follow the lead of Dewey's *A Common Faith.* When pragmatists say that they are religious because they believe that this is the kind of world that can be made better, they are affirming an attenuated theism. The cosmic fate of values is a crucial problem for prophetic religion; and most naturalists will insist with Max C. Otto and Bertrand Russell that man is the sole custodian of his ideals in a universe essentially indifferent to them. On the other hand, it is significant that philosophers as insistent on naturalistic method as Wieman and Meland make the objectivity of value a basic tenet.

7. Many naturalists express and practise a concern for social justice. Sidney Hook and John Dewey are outstanding examples, but so also are Morris Cohen and many in the New Humanist school of thought. The devotion to social righteousness is conceived by many of them to be the essence of religion. They display an undoubted zeal for a radical reformation of the capitalist social order, and much of their writing is as clear and incisive both in analysis and in constructive suggestions as any in circulation. Naturalism in America has frequently tended to concentrate much needed attention on conserving human values. Men like Hook have cooperated with men like Sherwood Eddy in presenting social philosophy of a radical type. Prophetic religion has been materially aided by the cooperative work of naturalists. This cooperation is an illustration of the fact that men can and do achieve in practice deeds of unity which theoretically are inadequately supported. As we shall see, naturalism as a general theory fails in its theoretical understanding of personality and value—the chief concept in religion—though in practice the actual work of conserving personality and realizing values goes on courageously.

All of the above tendencies are congruent with the practical interests of prophetic religion. It must be noted, however, that these doctrines have for a long time in principle been the platform of most philosophical theism. In naturalism they are belated ideas. While they support, they do not materially add to the fundamental personalism implied in prophetic religion, the philosophy that has been their nurturing soil and climate. Naturalistic philosophies have inherent defects—both in method and doctrine—which we now briefly consider.

1. There is a tendency for naturalists to identify their type of philosophy with scientific method. Although they do make extensive use of science, and though much in naturalism is appropriate to scientific work, it is presumptuous to assume that scientific method as such can resolve ultimate metaphysical issues or that any one philosophy has a

special claim on scientific work. To confine philosophical interpretation to the frames of reference of natural science is a clear indication that reductionism has not yet been entirely overcome in the naturalist's approach to reality. The method is still reductionist, as further evidence will reveal.

2. We have noted above that Dewey makes continuity the touchstone of a naturalistic logic. The tendency in spite of some evidence to the contrary is to view the continuity from the standpoint of the lower orders of being. Continuity, if it is to be a valid principle, must be viewed from a synoptic point of view. Moreover, there are other difficulties. One of these is to recognize that emergent evolution and the humanistic sciences imply certain discontinuities which are as genuine aspects of being as is continuity. The emergence of mind in nature is a novelty and novelty is discontinuous in a real sense from the previous state of affairs. The evidence reveals discontinuity, and the method must be humble before this evidence. Dewey recognizes the novel, and yet insists on the primacy of continuity. If there is to be real and inclusive continuity it must be theistic—we believe. The other difficulty is that Dewey goes too far in his attempt to overcome all dualism. The drive to eliminate the dualism of organism and environment, the dualism of higher and lower orders of being, the dualism of mind and body, and the dualism of man and society, is a part of his method of continuity. The danger in this method is of submerging the self in its environment and of losing sight of the unique status of personality as an active agent. Dewey's social philosophy tends toward perfectionism, and his ethical emphasis has been on the achievement of the unique good in each situation as well as on the attainment of freedom. And yet his whole method of continuity has militated against a clear and coherent conception of the self as individuality. On the other hand, it tends logically to do violence to personality, since it deals with it behavioristically. The elimination of all dualisms leads to what Hegel called "the night in which all cows are black."

3. The theory of levels, which we have noted above, is incomplete in the philosophy of naturalism. The emergence of new levels is still accepted with too much "natural piety." Lloyd Morgan's immanent theism seems to be the least that one could affirm on the basis of the evidence for novelty. The principle of sufficient reason would require that naturalists consider more seriously the category of cosmic purpose to account for the creative activity postulated by the emergence of any higher novelty, especially the novelty of finite mind. It is imperative that naturalists reintroduce the idea of productive causality into their theories.

The descriptive scientific and positivistic idea of cause is insufficient for metaphysical purposes.

4. One of the greatest weaknesses of the general theory which we are investigating is its overdependence on the almost daily fluctuations of the scientific weather. There was a time when most naturalists rested their case on what they believed to be the mechanical metaphysics postulated by the science of physics. Today, with the rise of "operational" physics and logical positivism, there seems to be hardly any metaphysical ground left to rest the case on—unless the naturalists go over to some kind of neo-Berkeleian philosophy. Sellars, it must be noted, still tries to stand by physical realism; but the drift in much "scientific" naturalism is to take refuge in semantics, or Viennese positivism, eschewing metaphysics altogether as nonsensical. Such tendencies evade the metaphysical demands presented by the fact of personality and its value experiences. No metaphysics, then no personality; no real values; and no meaningfulness in the historical process—including the attempts of positivism to have meaning. One of the basic grounds for the instability in naturalism which we have just described, is the ambiguity of the "nature." Idealists, theists and other devotees of personality have been bombarded by a constant demand from naturalists to "tell what personality is." Personality is consciousness capable of reason and ideal values. But what is nature? Its meaning fluctuates with every wind of scientific doctrine. More and more it appears that "nature" equals "all there is," and "naturalism" equals "philosophy."

5. The reduction of philosophy to science is apparent in a thinker like Ames, whose discussions of God and religion do not transcend the categories of social psychology. In this he leans heavily on the work of George Mead. Mead introduced into social psychology and into the literature of pragmatism the idea of a "generalized other." The generalized other, we are told, arises out of the process in which the self arises. For example, in conversation a person must put himself "at the point of view of the other and see himself as the other sees him. He reacts according to the responses he understands the other to be making." Thinking is held to be conversation with this generalized other. Ames finds in this idea a "fruitful enrichment of the idea of God and of the nature and function of prayer!"[9] Praying, on this basis, is talking things over with yourself, and God is simply the posited altar of this conversation. This analogy breaks down, of course, as soon as one recognizes that in a real conversation the "generalized other" has an objective reference to an existent, while the God of Ames, to use his

[9] Wieman and Meland, *American Philosophies of Religion*, p. 334.

own words, is only an "honorific absolute." Years ago Pratt pointed out that if the worshiper ever got on to what Ames' God really means, this insight would kill the goose that lays the golden egg of religion. In practice Ames has substituted devotion to the highest social values for prophetic religion with its objective reality of God. There is a basic difference between loyalty to an ideal and loyalty to God. Ames is a reductionist in that religion is reduced to social psychology.

6. This leads us to observe that most naturalistic thinking fails to distinguish clearly between religion and morality. Sellars says that "religion is self-conscious human life functioning in the face of its problems. It is the setting up of objectives and courage in their pursuit." In this definition the differentia of religion is omitted entirely. Completer and more empirical understanding of religious experience would reveal that religion is an attitude towards a super-human power with whom persons must deal and who presides over the fate of values. The identification of religion and morality is yet another illustration of reductionism, for religion is qualitatively different from social morality taken by itself.

7. The inaptitude of naturalism for prophetic religion may be illustrated, finally, from an article by John Herman Randall, Jr., "On the Importance of Being Unprincipled," which appeared recently in the *American Scholar*. He points out that men of principle are not able to get anywhere in politics without fighting, and they never really achieve anything. Randall defines a principle as a postulate or an assumption; it cannot be proved by anything else, nor verified by an experience different from your own; and since it cannot be proved if questioned, the only thing one can do is fight for it. The case is closed and the argument is over. Such a procedure leads to disaster. The only thing to do, says Randall, is to learn the method of politics and compromise. The principles cannot decide the matter.

This point of view is a travesty on all principles. It confuses dogmatism with principle and never gets beyond the wrangling of competing interests, for it provides no guiding principles for the resolution of conflict. Moreover, it makes of politics and compromise a sheer contest of power. The standpoint of prophetic religion, on the other hand, employs principles without making them absurdly absolute. It regards the will of God as the final judge, and requires all men to seek this will and commit themselves to seeking a fuller understanding of it. This will is not the objectification of man's highest ideals, although they are evidence for it. God is not an "honorific absolute." Man must be loyal to reason, but his thinking is not the absolute Reason. The

ultimate judge is an active agent, not an abstract idea. Randall, like many naturalists, seeks unity through compromise on the level of interest. Prophetic religion seeks unity on a level above the competing interests of men, though these interests are not ignored. They are transmuted, *aufgehoben,* through rational loyalty and common committal to the ultimate source of all insights and intuitions. Prophetic religion is empirical, rational, and realistic because Reality, not passing interest, has the final word.

The foregoing discussion has shown that many tendencies in current naturalism are favorable to the philosophical presuppositions of prophetic religion, and it has also shown defects and deficiencies in the movement. The structure of the paper may seem to set seven virtues over against seven deadly sins, but that is purely accidental. The virtues and sins do not cancel each other. If naturalism will face more empirically and rationally the whole of religious experience and the larger meanings of its own insights, then a firmer foundation may be laid for a consideration of personality and value, an enquiry which will bring new insights into the study of religion. The future of naturalism will depend partly on how it learns to face religion.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS IN OUR TIME[1]

JOHN ALEXANDER MACKAY
President, Princeton Theological Seminary

I was led to select the subject of this address by two considerations. The theme harmonized with my memory of an unforgettable time of fellowship with your President one day towards evening in the little village of Emmaus, in the Holy Land, at the close of the Jerusalem Conference in 1928. It blended equally with the spirit of an occasion like this on which the representative of one Christian tradition addresses the representatives of another.

I find a point of departure for what is on my mind to say in a famous and beautiful incident in the church life of Scotland. In the seventeenth century, at a time when a deadly feud was raging between Presbyterians and Episcopalians in the land of my birth, Archbishop Usher wandered through the south of Scotland incognito. He arrived one Saturday evening at the manse of Anworth, the home of the Scottish churchman and mystic, Samuel Rutherford. He was received with true Scottish hospitality. It was the custom in the Rutherford home for the members of the family, the servants and guests, to meet together on Saturday evenings to be catechized by the minister on their religious knowledge. The question addressed to the visitor of that particular evening was, "How many commandments are there?" His reply was "eleven." Those present were dumfounded at such amazing ignorance. The following morning Rutherford went out very early to meditate and pray in a neighboring grove of trees. What was his surprise upon reaching the spot to find a kneeling figure in the grove before him! It was the guest of the night before. The archbishop disclosed his identity. Rutherford invited him to preach at the morning service. The preacher took as his text the words of our Lord, "A new commandment give I unto you that ye love one another." The minister of Anworth, who was seated beside his wife in the manse pew, whispered in her ear, "There you have the eleventh commandment!" In days of ecclesiastical strife between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism, those two choice spirits enjoyed the communion of saints.

I.

This new commandment which our Lord added to the Decalogue has proved to be the most difficult commandment of all to keep. It

[1] Address, Commencement, Crozer Seminary, June, 1939.

requires an unusual measure of the love of God and of the love of men to beget, and very especially to maintain, the love of the brethren.

This is the clear testimony of history, sad and disturbing though that testimony may be. The family of God has not always been a very model family. The community of Jesus Christ has not at all times been worthy of its Lord. Too often Christians who have had a passionate love for God and a passionate love for their non-Christian neighbors have been cold towards each other. And strangely enough—oh, amazing perversity!—the closer they have been related to each other in creedal belief and ecclesiastical polity, that is to say in faith and in order, the more estranged have they often lived in the expression of Christian affection.

This unworthy and paradoxical fact has been due to two main causes, a very subtle sin of pride and an equally subtle sin of idolatry.

Pride in one form or another, pride in one's religious heritage or tradition, pride in some testimony borne to truth, pride of spiritual ancestry, or of cultural or social position, has often created a superiority complex in Christians which has made impossible that heart-tendering sympathy and that self-effacing humility which are the rich and inseparable expression of Christian love. In such instances the pagan sense of honor, illustrated afresh in the religion of National Socialism, has taken the place of the Christian sense of love.

I know two Presbyterian churches in a certain country, equally loyal to the Reformed standards in theology, identical in ecclesiastical polity, alike in their opposition to the use of hymns and instrumental music in public worship. Their relations, nevertheless, are more embittered than relations between any two other Presbyterian bodies in that country. The chief source of bitterness is the feeling on the part of one of those churches that union with the other would diminish the uniqueness of its own testimony to the truth.

A subtle form of idolatry has also been responsible for much of the coldness and estrangement that has marked relations between Christians. Sometimes this idolatry has taken the form of the worship of a creed, or of a theological formula. This is a sin to which we Presbyterians have too often succumbed. Let me not be misunderstood. It would ill become me to minimize the importance of theology. Theology is one of the everlasting needs of the Christian church, and a true theology was never more needed than today. But the human mind has an uncanny capacity. It is an inveterate God-maker. It forms ideas of God and the divine economy, and transfers its loyalty from God to its own ideas

of him and his ways. Ideas become God. Great dogmas, glorious formulations of truth, are converted into idols.

Now what are dogmas and creeds? A dogma may be compared to a telescope which, when we look through it, brings the divine things nearer to us, so that we may apprehend them more clearly and understand their meaning better. But some people, alas! become specialists in taking the dogmatic telescope to pieces and putting it together again without ever looking through it. They become experts in adjusting the relations between the parts of the instrument without ever adjusting their personal relations to the divine reality upon which the instrument is designed to concentrate their gaze. A creed is like a road map. It helps us to see the country as a whole, the lowlands and the uplands, the rivers and the plains; by using it we are able to travel from one part to another. But some people use a creed as a mere object of study. They never obtain a first-hand knowledge of the country of Truth by traversing its great highways; they never take the road to the great metropolis, the City of God. Whenever worship is given to an intellectual idol and not to God, the truth cannot be held in love; for an idol is dead and cannot create love. The more it is worshiped the more pride, not love is engendered. And when the truth is not held in love, the truth is not held at all; for love is a major part of truth. Pride, coldness, and complacency are compatible with the worship of an idol but are forever impossible when the object of adoration is a God who himself is love.

At other times divine honors are rendered to religious forms, to an ecclesiastical system or to liturgical practices. Hierarchical and non-hierarchical churches alike have fallen into this sin of idolatry. I know of no way in which the eleventh commandment is more tragically violated than when differences of opinion regarding the status of the Christian minister or the appropriate administration of the eucharistic rite makes it impossible for Christians to sit down together at the holy table of the Lord. Where this happens, a ceremonial idol comes between Christians and the supreme manifestation of Christian communion. An arrogant ecclesiastical idol is enthroned in the place of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. How painful the reflection that great ecumenical conferences have had to close in recent times without those attending them being able to symbolize their oneness in Christ as members of his Body, by partaking together of the symbols of the broken body and the shed blood of their Lord! In such cases not only has the new commandment been outraged, but Jesus Christ has been crucified afresh and put to an open shame.

II.

If the communion of saints is to be a living, contemporary reality in loyalty to the eleventh commandment, divine and human factors must play a part.

1. Foremost among the divine factors is the command of our Lord himself that Christians love one another. This command must be taken seriously. It is binding upon all Christians, at all times and under all circumstances. It is a permanent categorical imperative of the Christian life. It is an inescapable obligation which Christians will try to evade at their peril.

But Jesus well knew the frictions and tensions that would develop in the family relations of his followers. Had he done no more than provide them with a binding imperative he would have been a mere moralist; but he did more; he provided them with a motivating pattern. His love for them—which was a love unto death—was to be at once the motive-spring and the pattern of their love to one another.

Knowing also the weakness and sinfulness of human nature, he promised to imbue his disciples with the Holy Spirit, as an enabling power. It was the Spirit who would lead them into all love as well as into all truth, or better still, into that truth which is fulfilled in love. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit the followers of Jesus would receive power to love one another unto the uttermost, at all times, and under all circumstances—as they would receive power to do the many other things required by their Christian calling.

Thus the Christian Lord bequeathed to his own this new command from the Father as their law; he provided them with a new motivating pattern as their guide; he supplied them with a new enabling power to make possible the achievement of brotherly love. The reality of Christian love, the glory of the communion of saints, is made possible therefore, only when God, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is taken seriously, and when all the rich experiences of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity become the most practical of realities in daily living. When we ask ourselves what we shall do as members of the family of God, the answer is, love one another. When we ask ourselves why we should love one another, the answer is, because Christ loved us and made us members of his body in love. When we ask ourselves, how we shall be able to perform the superhuman task of loving all Christians at all times, and under all circumstances, the answer is, through the Holy Ghost. It is only in this understanding and spirit that Christ's new commandment can be fulfilled.

2. No less important are certain human factors.

The first of these is *mutual appreciation.* Let each Christian communion come to know and appreciate every other. Will you allow me at this point to become somewhat lyrical. I have owed so much adown the years to the influence of other Christian denominations that I take this opportunity to discharge part of my debt to them by recounting how much I owe them. While increasingly proud, with a legitimate Christian pride, I hope, of the Reformed tradition to which I belong, my spirit has been long since emptied of all sectarianism by my debt of love to other traditions than my own.

My Christian life began in the fellowship of one of the smallest and most austere religious groups in all Christendom. I was twice refused church membership because the evidence was not sufficiently clear that I was a subject of divine grace. The third time I applied I was admitted into full communion. Yet if ever I heard the voice of God it was among those austere, God-fearing, psalm-singing, organ-hating Presbyterians in the mountains of northern Scotland. As a student in Aberdeen University, I attended a Baptist church. There I found my life companion. It was at a little mission meeting conducted by that Baptist congregation that I lisped my first gospel message in public. During the two years that I spent in Princeton Seminary, contact with American Presbyterianism widened my religious sympathies and deepened my human interests. For the first time since my conversion I was able to transcend a false asceticism which had made it sin for me to engage in ordinary forms of healthy physical recreation. While I prepared myself in Madrid, Spain, for my future life as a missionary in South America, I found the deepest religious fellowship in a congregation of Plymouth Brethren. I spoke in Spanish for the first time at a cottage meeting in the workmen's suburb of Tetuan, where I used to go on Sundays with the leader of the meeting. In Montevideo, Uruguay, we attended a Methodist Episcopal church. Contact with members of the latter led me to absorb in no small measure that social concern which we have associated with Methodism in these last times. As a continental evangelist in Latin lands where people had reacted strongly against religious ritual of all kinds, and, very especially in Mexico, where a ban was placed upon all religious services not conducted by national ministers or priests who had been duly registered, it was necessary to adopt a Quaker type of service for unchurched people. Among the Mexican mountains, far from any organized meeting of the Society of Friends, I learned the meaning of silence in religious worship. Now in Princeton, at the head of an historic Presbyterian theological seminary, I enjoy unusual fellowship from time to time with

dear Episcopalian friends. How could I be sectarian? To adapt a famous saying of John Woolman's which has often haunted me, I have become "baptized into a feeling sense" of all traditions. And I have done so while becoming more and more enthusiastic about the tradition to which I belong, whose historic riches I am discovering afresh, and whose relevance to the religious situation today I am eager to restate.

This leads me to say a word, by way of digression, about the movement toward church unity. The next step forward in the ecumenical movement will take place when each great religious tradition rediscovers itself, when it reviews itself in the dual light of the divine revelation in Holy Scripture, and of sister traditions, and when, with a full awareness of contemporary needs and a new compelling sense of its mission, it applies itself to say and do those things to which God is calling it in our time. For us Presbyterians that will mean a reaffirmation of the sovereignty of God in these times. For you Baptists it will mean a reaffirmation of the fact that they alone belong to the true church who have been born again and have dedicated their lives whole-heartedly to Jesus Christ. In the great Baptist church in Cleveland, where the last Presbyterian General Assembly met, I saw the genius and everlasting symbol of your denomination. It was the baptismal font, located high up in the wall behind the pulpit, where it riveted the gaze of all who filled the immense auditorium. Our starting-point has been God and his claims upon us; your starting-point has been the response of the Christian soul to God, leading to immersion in the waters of baptism. As our two traditions come together this day, let us learn afresh of each other. Let us explore together and translate into life anew the meaning of God and the Christian soul.

When each great Christian tradition rediscovers itself afresh, and achieves a true appreciation of every other, consideration of general church union will be in order. But nothing is more to be feared—and heartily repudiated—than a church union based upon expediency or one in which the members of two denominations have become so far indifferent to what they have stood for that they have forgotten what they are.

III.

The second human condition which must be fulfilled if the communion of saints is to become real, is that Christian denominations should engage in united action. It is upon the road, joined in common Christian service, that Christians come to understand and love one another.

Let the churches become pattern communities. How can the communion of saints ever be more than a name if members of Christian

churches find truer fellowship in the membership of secular associations than they find in the churches to which they belong? Recent history in Germany contains a warning for the Christian church. How was it that the National Socialist government succeeded so easily in bending many Christian congregations to its will? Because thousands, and tens of thousands of church members had ceased to find within the membership of their churches the sense of fellowship for which they craved and the assurance of meaning in life which they had lost.

If the church is truly to be the church, its members must find in communion with one another a deeper satisfaction than they find in association with the members of any other group. They must sound depths in each other's company that they never sound in any other company. It is necessary, too, that all the barriers that divide the human family in ordinary society should be transcended within the fellowship of the church. Here Capitalists and Socialists, master and servant, the lady and her maid, must live together in understanding and confiding fellowship as members of the body of Christ. The injustices of society must not be projected into the community of the faithful. Within the church fellowship it should be possible to undertake experiments in social living in the interests of society as a whole.

Let the churches become, what it is God's purpose they should become, *the true world community.* It is happily the case that the Christian church today is an ecumenical church for the first time in history. Its membership is coextensive with the inhabited globe. At a time when deep chasms run along national frontiers, at a time when it is impossible to find a formula capable of uniting the nations in an international fellowship, the Christian church, despite its disunion, is essentially one in her loyalty to Jesus Christ. The problem of internationalism is to find a bond of unity that can bind the nations at the center. The problem of ecumenicity is to discover how the common bond of union in Jesus Christ can be visibly expressed in the external life of the Christian church and applied by the church in all its contacts with the world, national and international.

At the present time the Christian church is a great fellowship of pain. In many countries around the world members of the Body of Christ are suffering as they have not suffered in many centuries. It is for those of us who are free to worship God according to our conscience and to apply our Christian principles with the utmost liberty, to prove that we are really Christian and that we really believe in the Christian church as the Body of Christ. This we can do in these sad days only in the measure in which we enter into spiritual communion with those of

our brethren who are in distress. Let us not speak of the ecumenical church or of the Body of Christ unless we are prepared to extend the right hand of fellowship to Christian refugees from abroad, and to incorporate them into our churches in this country. If we are ready to suffer with and for these brethren, their presence among us will enrich our lives and we shall know in some small measure what it means to share the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. Let us at the same time think of those Christians in every land who are victims of aggression, and, through prayer and practical giving and the influence which we may be able to exert upon the rulers of the nations, let us make the solidarity of the Christian church a reality in our time and the communion of saints a spiritual achievement.

Finally, *let this pattern world community devote itself to the supreme task, to the task of evangelism.* Members of many different denominations in America have in these last times enjoyed the unspeakable privilege of working together in a great evangelistic effort. The National Preaching Mission has done more to make us one than anything that has taken place in the church life of the nation in many generations. In the University Christian Mission we are making a united approach to the centers of culture across the country, especially to those great state institutions which by their charter must be religiously neutral. In the present religious yearning in the heart of youth and the fresh realization on the part of thousands of faculty members that culture and religion dare not be divorced from one another, tasks confront us in which we must all take part.

In this effort we specially need the cooperation of our laity, most of all of men and women of Christian faith who enjoy merited prestige in the country's seats of learning. I have two friends in a great university. One is a student pastor, the other a leading professor of philosophy. Sometime ago I heard the professor of philosophy say in an intimate group, "I consider it my function as a Christian and a philosopher to rid the minds of my students of false conceptions which make it difficult for them to accept Christianity, and at the same time to provide them with an intellectual framework into which Christian faith can fit and its validity be recognized. When I have done that, I hand them over to J——," naming his clerical friend. I have never known more inspiring and effective cooperation between a Christian teacher and a Christian minister in the interests of educated youth. If only this kind of communion of saints might be reproduced and multiplied in all our colleges and universities throughout the land! God and the times demand that it should. Only thus can a Christian world-view grip the mind and

imagination of youth. Only thus can Christian evangelism be effectively promoted in our institutions of learning.

In the meantime, let us make the most of the unity that we have. Let us study one another, and learn from one another, and work together. Let us love one another in obedience to Christ, moved by the love of Christ and guided by the pattern of his love. If we do this, the Holy Spirit of truth will lead us into all truth, especially into that truth that concerns the love of the brethren, the communion of saints.

AN INVENTORY OF THE JEW AND JUDAISM AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA

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The Jew and his Judaism are intertwined inextricably in Jewish history. One may not study Jewish history without at the same time gleaning the story of Judaism. One may not study Judaism without at the same time learning of the story of the Jew. But one may study the history of England and learn only of an episode here and there of the religious history of England; and so of Italy and Russia, to cite but two other examples.

In Judaism there is no distinction between the sacred and the profane. Everything, every event, every individual appears *sub specie æternitatis.* In Judaism secular events have been lifted to the level of the sacred and incorporated in the religious calendar: the Passover, for example, commemorating the Exodus, an historical event, is an important religious festival; and so the Succoth, or Tabernacles, commemorating the wanderings in the wilderness, and Pentecost, or Shabuoth, identified with the Revelation on Sinai.

But the beginnings of Jewish history and of Judaism are not coincidental. The Exodus occurred, probably under the reign of Meneptah II (middle 13 Cent. B. C. E.); the monarchy under Saul, about 1100 B. C. E. But Judaism, as we know it today, was fashioned by the Babylonian Exile (586-536 B. C. E.), out of antecedent religious elements as a base, and became organized under Ezra at the Convocation in Jerusalem, in 444 B. C. E., the time, if you will, when Pericles reigned in Athens and Demosthenes was rolling pebbles in his mouth at Coz.

Historically, the Jew has been contemporary and in close relationship with all the great nations of antiquity; thus down to the beginnings of the Christian era, Egypt, Assyria, Syria, Babylonia, Greece, and Rome broke swords with the Jew, whose little land was on the highway of the nations, often a buffer state, for a hundred years at least—a shuttlecock between Egypt and Syria, contending for possession of this key to the hinterland. And somehow every clash contributed to the enrichment of the mind and soul of the Jew. The dynasties, militant, powerful, robustious, each in turn disintegrated into dust, but puny Israel marched on. Always Israel remained the palpitating vital message; always the

Goliath became only a memory and a byword. "Verily man doth not prevail by might or power." "Righteousness alone exalteth a people." "God looketh to the heart not the stature"—thus did Israel reflect. Thus out of the furnace of affliction was born a constantly deepening intuition of the nature of Deity and of man's relationship to him.

But a more detailed analysis should reenforce generalization, if conviction is to be achieved. Regardless of our own individual attitude to the Bible, whether it be regarded as plenarily inspired or as an historical growth, the Biblical ideas go back from a half to two-thirds of the distance to the emergence of civilization five thousand years ago. Though one may not fix the exact point in time when a significant Biblical intimation was first sensed, yet anything Biblical is at once so ancient as to preclude from consideration the participation in its origin of any of the generations since the beginnings of the Christian era, at least. But antecedent to the Christian era, historians preponderantly recognize that the religion of Israel before Ezra was incorporated in the reforms of Ezra, enunciated at the meeting referred to in 444 B. C. E.

Recognized scholars are on record—and one need not quarrel as to the scale of values—that the conception of a universal ethical monotheism is a transcendant contribution to civilization. Enunciated first by the prophets in the eighth century and developed by their successors, the beginnings of the conception are limned in Abraham's pilgrimage to Caanan from his father's house in Ur. King Solomon, too, seems to have had a statesman's insight—despite the condemnation of contemporaries who understood him not—when he made it possible for temporary guests from other countries to worship in Jerusalem in their own sanctuaries, built on soil imported from their native lands. And again, Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem, evincing mindfulness of a people, "not of thy people, Israel," reveals a conception of Deity as transcending national bounds. To be sure, the inclusive monotheistic conception of God once launched gained headway all abouts, as witness the idea of national deities, absolute and independent of one another, denominated Henotheism by Max Müller in the last century.

Moreover, this God was conceived of as in the world. He was not an Aristotelian unmoved mover who moves without moving. He was imminent in the world. He was a working, creative God; and ever since, labor has been dignified and consecrating—a not negligible attitude in this work-a-day world of ours.

The idea of prayer, too, had undergone a refining process in the crucible of experience in the pre-Christian centuries. The condemnation of sacrifices as religious fulfilment is familiar from prophets; like Isaiah,

who condemns the treading of temple courts, and sackcloth and ashes, and insists on clothing the naked, feeding the poor, etc., as evidences of righteousness. But antecedent details are significant. In Genesis 22, it is discovered that a ram, caught by its horns in a thicket behind Abraham, is an acceptable substitute for the sacrifice of Isaac. The intention was genuine, the motive whole, and an angel of God declares Abraham a God-fearing man. Men had arrived at the realization that Jephthah's daughter, that Isaac, in short that the immolation of humans, was not demanded by God. And when Hannah in the presence of old Eli stood silently in prayer in the temple court at Shiloh and was blessed with the child she craved, another rung had been gained in the realization that the shoutings of the prophets of Baal on Carmel, that lashings and gesticulations and noise, are impotent in gaining accession to the universal God before whom *being* and not *seeing* is the *sine qua non.* Earnest communion with God—unadulterated motive, conscience-craving satisfaction, untrammeled frankness in probing—prayer for insight and guidance is man's open sesame to the presence of God.

The abolition of sacrifice was the underlying motive in the Deuteronomic reforms accredited to King Josiah, about 621 B. C. E., whereby sacrifices could no longer be offered at the local shrines, but were consummated only at the central shrine in Jerusalem. This program received the acid test of practical application when upon the fall of the Temple, in 70 A. C. E., sacrifices could no longer be offered at all; and the three pilgrim festivals, bearing the imprimatur of nationalism, yielded place to the New Year and Atonement days, universalistic in import and observable at any time under all conditions in any clime.

As the trappings of religion were minimized, conduct as the application of religion to life came into the foreground. As sackcloth and ashes, and sacrifices—Temple ceremonials—were pushed into the background, the religion became personalized. Not the cleanness of the communal—the national escutcheon—was the one motive of religious interest, but the individual per se. It was his wholeheartedness, his integrity, his righteousness that religion was set to guard and strengthen. "Say not," Ezekiel urged, "that the fathers have eaten sour grapes, therefore the children's teeth are set on edge." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" Responsibility became the challenge in the response to which man achieved a social destiny.

Religion today is of great social import. In fact, religion is religion only as it is social. The righteousness of the individual is inane in isolation. What avail his sense of justice, his appreciation of virtue, his loyalty to truth, square dealing, chivalric consideration, gentleness,

lovingkindness, if they be hothouse plants not functioning in human relations? But the sociality of religion today has its roots in the past. In the pre-exilic religion of Israel, the institutions of the Sabbath, of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years, of the fallow lands, the cities of refuge, and the organization of tribunals were social institutions. The stress of the prophets on conformation to God's will as indispensable to salvation, whether it be the Philistines from Caphtor or the Ethiopians from Kir, or the Israelite in the Northern Kingdom in Amos' day; or the rending of hearts and not of garments, or the insistences, in Leviticus XIX, that neither the deaf nor the blind be discommoded nor the wages of a hired man held over until the morning; or the regulations governing the Jewish community, however astringent they may seem to us, laid down by Ezra—all these institutions in the religion of the Jew before the Christian era seem evidence enough of the social momentum inherent in his faith.

A religion that proclaimed a universal ethical God, that increasingly spiritualized prayer, and which, correspondingly, depreciated the externals of religion such as sacrifice, that directed the individual through personal unfoldment to social effectiveness, would seem as a truncated prism, if somehow the consciousness of human brotherhood were not a part of its equipment. But Malachi's question, "Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us all?" shows plainly enough the thought of the best minds in his day or earlier; whilst Cain's query, still more ancient, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is not yet without significance.

Possibly no corollary in religion, next to the universal God idea, has been more meaningful in the unfoldment of humanity than this idea of the relatedness of all men, regardless of race, color, geographical origin, personal endowment, or material substance.

Not only is the recognition of the brotherhood of men at the basis of socialization in religion, but it is also the core of the democratic impulse. Our President is right in asserting the inevitableness of the relationship between religion, democracy, and internationalism. The Jew in the pre-Christian era was definitely of the inclusive mood. The legend on the Liberty Bell, "proclaim liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof," is biblical in origin; the objections of Samuel to the establishment of a monarchy; the theocratical ideas as the guiding principles in government organization—to which the Puritans were committed also—in fact the whole "tendenz" of the religion of the Jew in Biblical and post-Biblical times was incorrigibly of the cooperative and fraternal type.

Sociality and recognition of personality inhere in a religion deter-

mined by the democratic impulse. Another emphasis is also always preeminent: appreciation of the informed mind. Knowledge becomes a handmaiden of religion. The mind in its insatiable curiosity is encouraged to explore all the precincts where knowledge may be found. Truth conceals no secrets which religion may not know. To the Jew heaven was not a Valhalla of beautiful women, handsome men, and delectable viands, but a Yeshiba Shal Maalah—an Academy on High—a place for greater opportunity for mental and spiritual unfoldment—a school where men, free from the trammels of the flesh, shall be emboldened to essay greater flights in the understanding of the Great Taskmaster.

The educational process was ever significant in ancient Israel. As the Christian era dawned, schools dotted the slopes of Palestine and Babylonia. Tiberias, Sepphoris, Sura, Nehardea, Pumbedita are famous for the academies they harbored. Jochanan ben Zakkai, a pacifist within besieged Jerusalem, in the year 70 A. C. E. escaped to Vespasian, and besought permission to establish a school at Jamnia. In American educational history, we hark back to the school laws of 1642 and 1647 in Massachusetts as the foundations of the establishment of tax-free grammar and high schools in America. But in the beginning of the Christian era, Nitai of Arbela and Simon Ben Schetach had established similar legislation in Judæa. During the Syrian oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes, beginning 167 B. C. E., when Israel was forbidden to read the Torah, the rabbis decreed that it was more important to teach the Torah than to practise it. Since all education was religious and under direction of the rabbis, religion, i. e. Judaism, should be credited with a deep concern for the educational and spiritual development of the mind.

Contacts of individuals or groups are seldom neutral. Personalities impinge for good or ill. Sometimes contacts are sought, sometimes they are foisted upon one. In proselytism preceding the Christian era, the Jew was active. Roman writers—Tacitus, Juneral, Horace—have left comments on this Jewish activity for good or ill.

Among the lords and ladies adherents were found. The Roman Princess Fulvia, wife of Saturminus, a senator, and Queen Helen and her sons are examples. But proselytising once, but once only, and with ominous sequel, was carried to forcible conversion: John Hyrcauus (175-104 B. C. E.) compelled the Idumæans to choose the Torah or the sword. But after Christianity arose, Judaism, for one reason or another, withdrew from proselytising and Christianity, taking over the methods of the Jew, carried it on.

But the Jew also learned from the people with whom he came in contact. The Israelitish invasion of Canaan did much for the religion

of Israel; the agricultural Canaanites represented a civilization superior to that of the pastoral Israelites. Babylonia, Assyria, and other nations left an impress upon Israel. One of the most significant was the meeting with Persia. Belief in the future life is often assumed to have been innate in every religion—and much as it is today. But, of course, the belief in immortality is a growth, not a full-fledged conception from the head of Jove. References early abound indicating fugitive insights into a future life. "Who knoweth whether the soul goeth up or down?" is such a Biblical query. "I know that my redeemer liveth," asserts Job. But after contact with the Persians, the belief in bodily resurrection became part of Jewish theology.

Meanwhile, the rise of the Messianic idea laid groundwork for refinement of the conception. In the latter half of the twelfth century, Moses Maimonides, an outstanding Aristotelian, wavers between emphasis on bodily resurrection and the immortality of the soul. But by the middle of the eighteenth century, the conception of the immortality of the soul, first enunciated by Plato, became embodied completely in the theology of liberal Judaism.

And so the inventory of the Jew and Judaism before the Christian era seems reasonably complete, though not exhaustive—and not, I hope, completely exhausting. I do hope it bears an impress of truthful evaluation and not a sophomoric attempt to throw back into the alembic of yesterday, without due basis, everything conceived as of value in religion of today. The Judaism of the time of which we speak seems to have had incorporated in its texture the following items of importance:

1. A universalistic ethical God idea—a God who was immanent, creative, and working, and who preferred conduct to ceremonial.
2. A conception of prayer, exalted and personal to a degree, free from impotent practices.
3. A conception of the individual that made him a significant personality in the cosmos.
4. An insistence that religion to be effective must be concerned with human relationships.
5. An espousal of the democratic impulse.
6. A pronounced interest in the intellectual and spiritual unfoldment of its devotees.
7. An enthusiastic interest in the religious well-being of others.
8. And, finally, an unquestioned assumption of the continuity of life as embodied in physical resurrection, already in process of refinement by Messianic ideology.

In conclusion, a word about the Jew. At the beginning of the Christian era, he found himself not over a million strong, bereft of a national and religious center, scattered to the four corners of the world. Ever since—nearly two thousand years—the religion that untoward circumstances could not annihilate has been his pillar of fire by night and his cloud by day. The malignities of men, the discriminations, the injustices, the misrepresentations, the sticks and stones, have been multifarious and various, but the Jew has not succumbed. Despite all insidious maneuverings, the Jew, the world over, today numbers some fifteen millions. Neither armies and navies, nor territorial expanse, nor portentous substance have given him resilience, but spiritual integrity, stedfastness, and persistence. Loyal and patriotic — I hope — efficient and dynamic, he is a citizen in every land where bigotry is not completely blind, a harbinger, as it seems to me, of the time Isaiah pictured so magnificently in his figure of the lion and the lamb and the child so placidly together—an age which Tennyson only a few decades back portrayed as a time

> When war drums shall throb no longer,
> And battle-flags be furled
> In the Parliament of Man
> The Federation of the World!

May Israel continue faithful to the eternal verities!

A THEOLOGY TO SUSTAIN A RELEVANT EVANGELISM [1]

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I

Two sharply contrasted texts in the Bible have often fascinated the imaginations of Christians—"There is nothing new under the sun," and, "Behold, all things are become new."

These texts reflect two persistent human attitudes—the studied pessimism of the Gloomy Preacher, the Biblical progenitor of Dean Inge and others of his ilk; and the ecstatic expectancy of the author of Revelation—the Biblical progenitor of all passionate idealists, discerning the first radiance of the kingdom of God just breaking across the horizon. From these attitudes spring, in every age, the two persistent types of human philosophy—classicism and modernism. One declares, "Old ways are best. Old truth is surest. Life never changes. There is nothing new under the sun." The other proclaims, "Only the latest is true. Life forever advances. The best is yet to be. Behold, all things are becoming new."

It is not so often discerned that these two attitudes are perennial just because they have their roots deep in two persistent features of each man's life. Fully to grasp this fact is the first wisdom in comprehending human experience; it is the first article in a sound Doctrine of Man. In the factors which surround us, forming the external setting of our life, we are children of our age. In the interior perplexities and disappointments, satisfactions and joys, we reenact the familiar, age-old round of all humanity. This is the experience of each individual; it is the experience, also, of each generation. In the profounder agonies of each succeeding generation, there is nothing new under the sun. In the particular issues confronting each generation, behold all things are forever new.

It is with men and generations so constituted that religion deals. Like them, it is at once always new and always the same. This recognition should guard us against viewing the problems of Christian thought in our own day too uncritically as "altogether new"; it should lead us to give due weight to the persistent elements in human experience and in Christian truth pertaining to them. We want a theology relevant for

[1] Address, Pastor's Conference, Crozer Seminary, April, 1939.

today, but not relevant for today only. Yet it is important for us to gain a fresh comprehension of our situation. This involves a fuller understanding of the background of the contemporary scene.

II

Like the generations that have preceded us, we are the heirs of developments of which we are largely unaware. An adequate survey of our background would need to trace its story at least from the Renaissance. We must be content to note the most important developments of the past half century or so.

From the point of view of our special concern—the health of religion—one feature of that period stands out clearly above all others, *the progressive secularization of American life.* Illustration might be drawn from any one of a dozen areas. A single illustration will suffice, taken, however, from an especially significant area, that of education. Trends in education are always the most revealing barometer of national conviction. If you would discover what ideals Americans intend to profess, study the education which they demand for their children,[2] whether in institutions of lower or higher grades.

Higher education in the United States was originally founded and conducted almost exclusively under Christian auspices. Institutions were of two kinds—the older colleges which have now become the great endowed universities, many of them started mainly as training schools for the Christian ministry (like Harvard College, lest New England be cursed with an illiterate ministry), almost all of them under religious supervision, not a few until very recently invariably entrusting their presidency only to a Christian minister; and the later and smaller "church colleges," founded by particular communions under the most intimate ecclesiastical control. Thus, until close to the turn of the century, the relation of religion to higher education in this country was twofold. Religion was the sponsor and parent of education. And religion furnished the keystone for the educational arch with reference to which the entire curriculum and every aspect of college life must be oriented. This was precisely as most Americans wished it. The place demanded for religion in the education of their children exactly mirrored the importance they professed to give it in their own lives. Whatever their lip-service to the church in business procedure or private practice, to it they entrusted the supreme responsibility—the training of the next generation, and so the destiny of the future.

[2] This paper draws heavily upon material more fully developed elsewhere. References to the fuller discussions are indicated in the footnotes. See *God in These Times,* pp. 47-49, 57-59.

Contrast the situation today. The older institutions, now the great and wealthy universities, have sloughed off the last semblance of ecclesiastical control. While formal acknowledgment of religion is often maintained through chapel services (attended sometimes by the university authorities, but more typically by a tiny remnant of faithful faculty, a well-nigh imperceptible handful of students, and a miscellaneous aggregation of academic camp-followers), the spirit of the services is unmistakable; they smack of ceremonies dutifully performed in fidelity to an ancient and respected tradition, now musty and obsolete. By no honest exaggeration could it be affirmed that religion wields a determinative influence upon university policy. As for the "church colleges," many of them find themselves more and more uncomfortable in their religious affiliations; and religion, no longer the keystone for their educational arch, appears to be one stone among many, and a stone for which no sound and satisfactory place within the educational structure has thus far been discovered. Meantime, the great state and city colleges, avowedly secular in auspices, have multiplied in mushroom-growth until they now offer higher education to a good half of the youth of the land.

The important point is—the status of religion within education continues an extraordinarily revealing barometer. Still, the place which Americans demand for religion in the training of their children exactly reflects its importance and influence within their own conviction. Indeed, no better illustration of the "end-product" of this process which has dominated American life through the past half century could be discovered than the present-day undergraduate. There is a phrase gaining wider and wider currency among Christian workers in the colleges, "religious illiteracy." The phrase exactly describes the situation. We have reached absolute rock-bottom in the matter of student ignorance in religion. The plain truth is that in the best universities in the land, drawing men and women from homes of highest culture, intelligence, and privilege, it is safe to assume nothing, *absolutely nothing,* not only of religious experience, but of religious information. Two of a dozen instances from recent contacts may be given. In one of the finest eastern women's colleges, the professor of religion in an elective course of over eighty girls made passing reference to "the woman of Samaria." A hand shot up; a student asked if he would explain the reference. The professor inquired how many of the class had ever heard of Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well, or the Samaritan woman. Three responded. When one of them was asked to describe the incident, she replied that she *thought* Jesus asked the woman for a drink and she refused to give it to him; but she could not be sure. At a splendid

boys' school in the East, the visiting preacher gave the headmaster as the Scripture lesson for the morning the familiar passage in Matthew 23, of woes upon the scribes and Pharisees. The headmaster asked, "Are you planning to talk about the scribes and Pharisees?" "Well, I'm going to refer to them." "Then, you'll explain who the scribes and Pharisees were, won't you? The boys would have no idea." These are not extreme illustrations; they are thoroughly typical.

We cannot pause to examine the causes of this transmutation within education, nor to assess its validity. Here is the real key in the matter. The great passions of the modern American have been the amassing of money, the multiplying of comforts, the wielding of material and tangible symbols of importance; his great interests have been the improvement of the appurtenances and conveniences of life; his great loyalties have been given to the gods of the modern age, the gods of the passing hour. As his concern, his interest, and his loyalty have gradually shifted their center, that change has, almost undetected, registered itself in the structure of national education. The steady secularization of education accurately mirrors the progressive secularization of American life. And the progressive secularization of American life is the most notable single feature of the decades to which we are heir.

III

But religion was of the warp and woof of the national life as it underwent such rapid and radical transformation. Inevitably, the influence upon the character and fortunes of religion was profound. It worked its alchemy in two ways, both directly and indirectly. Indirectly, through the gradual creation of both a "learned mind" and a "common mind"—abysmally ignorant of the most elementary facts of Christianity and instinctively unreceptive toward traditional religion; directly, through the gradual permeation of the thought and life of the church itself by the attitudes and presuppositions of the life and thought of the day. The first has given us the most familiar external obstacles to the advance of religion, ignorance, and kindly disdain. The second has nurtured the most dangerous internal disease within the organism of our religion—a diluted, vapid, and inadequate faith. Of the two influences the latter, the direct, was much the more important. This brings us to the main interest of this paper—developments within religious thought which have vitally affected our outlook and message.

Most of us, whether consciously or unconsciously, are children of what is loosely termed the "liberal movement in theology." Even those whose initial religious heritage was very different, in the measure that

they have heard and read the more progressive Christian leaders of our day, have become deeply impregnated with the liberal outlook.

In the perspective available to us it is quite clear that the prevailing trend in theology—the liberal movement—was the child of two parents of very different lineage and temperament; and that their offspring inherited from them contrasted and not always reconcilable characteristics. These parents were the dominant intellectual outlook of the late-nineteenth century, and the evangelical revival of the same late-nineteenth century. It was a strange paradox of history that these two movements, so contrasted in inspiration, temper, and aim, the great intellectual adventure pioneered by modern science and the great Christian awakening quickened through Dwight L. Moody, Henry Drummond, and others, should have synchronized. In any event, from their confluence issued contemporary liberal Christianity. It is, perhaps, not undue servitude to the metaphor to suggest that one parent, more masculine in temperament, supplied the mental furnishing, the thought-forms, for the child's mind; while the other, characteristically feminine in reliance on emotion and passionate idealism, contributed the profounder qualities of heart and hope. To the one parent, most liberals owed their intellectual point of view; to the other, their personal piety. As more than one student remarked of his liberal teacher, "He lectures with the voice of modernism, but he prays with the fervor of the old orthodoxy." To press the metaphor farther, we may suggest that, as so often happens in real life, the early predominance of the mother's influence was gradually displaced by that of the father; youthful exuberant faith gave way to hard-headed intellectualism and scepticism. To say the same thing without metaphor, liberalism was partly a movement of adjustment, of accommodation, of reorientation; of adjustment to the new thought-world which was rapidly winning sway over men's minds; and it was partly a movement of vigorous, buoyant expansion, springing from a vivid and dynamic rebirth of personal Christian experience.

To its dual parentage, liberal Christianity owed both its extraordinarily rich and varied heritage and the inner tensions which were an inevitable accompaniment. Elsewhere, I have recently suggested an analysis of the more important contributions of each parent, as follows:[3]

From the Outlook of the Modern Mind:

1. *Liberalism's basic and resolute loyalty to truth.* It is necessary to steep oneself in the musty and cramping dungeons of the then-prevalent orthodoxy to appreciate how great a release this principle—fidelity to

[3] See *The Church Through Half a Century,* Ch. III.

truth rather than to tradition—gave to eager and honest young minds of the eighteen-eighties.

2. *Liberalism's deference to science and the scientific method.* This influence, familiar to us all, has been so widely stressed and its consequences so fully worked out that we need only mention it here. In the new and freer quest for truth, the authority of dogma was, for many, displaced by the authority of science.

3. Not so generally recognized is liberalism's *uncertainty as to the importance and validity of reason, of hard thinking, in reaching religious certainty.* For it has not been sufficiently noted how profoundly the outlook which liberal theology inherited from its male parent was penetrated by an enervating intellectual scepticism, and how far the child was infected by the parental paralysis. This was partly due to the avowed tentativeness of science, partly to the dominating philosophical trend which flowed down the nineteenth century from Kant and worked its way into theology, mainly through Ritschl, and partly to certain characteristic attitudes of the other parent, evangelicalism, with its suspicion of metaphysics, its indifference to natural theology, its confident reliance upon the testimony of personal religious experience as our only trustworthy and all-sufficient guide to the truth about God. But when the early fire of evangelical experience burned low and the sceptical conclusions of science replaced it as authoritative, the result was a withering insecurity in men's hold on God.

4. *Liberalism's acceptance of the major positive principle of the new outlook—the principle of continuity.* In the ablest analysis and appraisal of liberalism yet made, Professor Bennett well says: "Running through the whole theology of liberalism there has been the assumption of continuity in the world—continuity between revelation and natural religion, between Christianity and other religions, between the saved and the lost, between Christ and other men, between man and God." This principle of continuity received its great impetus from the "doctrine" of evolution —the great "discovery" of the nineteenth century. Its direct influence upon Christian theology is discovered in the idea of immanence; in the melting of the traditional antithesis between nature and the supernatural; in a quite new tolerance toward other religions than Christianity—and indeed toward no religion at all; in a fresh and enthusiastic interpretation of Christ's divinity through his humanity; in the dominance of the idea of progress; above all, in a lofty estimate of man and his powers of accomplishment, both material and spiritual, from which there flowed confident expectancy of the realization of a Christian society in the very near future.

5. With these more specific attitudes and convictions, our theology inherited also the *spirit of liberalism*—dispassionate tolerance, open-minded receptivity, honesty unafraid, faith in "sweet reasonableness" as well as in the powers of human reason, modesty in claim to truth, respect for human personality, for justice, for honor, for truth—all precious and hard-bought achievements of the human spirit in the nineteenth century, and quite inestimable gifts to our intellectual and spiritual heritage.

From its other parent, evangelicalism, liberal theology also drew a rich inheritance. If the discredit of traditionalism had not synchronized with a wide-spread revival of personal religion, it is difficult to imagine what the story of Christianity in our time might have been. Certainly it would have been very different from what it was. But, just at the moment when the external bulwarks of faith were crumbling, leaving the central core of faith exposed to deepening uncertainty under the acids of the new science, something approaching revival was set loose throughout the English-speaking world, on both sides of the Atlantic. Men of ability and imagination were claimed for leadership in the church. Energies were released that carried the practical enterprises of the church in astounding expansion to the far corners of the earth and into neglected areas of the common life. The distinctive contributions of evangelicalism to liberal theology were determined partly by the central genius of the movement, partly by the dangers against which it must furnish safeguards. Let us speak of four.

1. *The authority of Christian experience.* When Christians could no longer rest upon familiar orthodoxy for the certainty which living faith requires, there was available to them the needed assurance in an even more accessible and surer source—in the witness of their own personal religious life. There swept through their ranks a vivid and compelling discovery of the presence of God, "the living Christ," within their own spirits. Why trouble about formal and external validation when so intimate and undeniable a certainty ruled their very souls? This was the cornerstone of liberal evangelicalism—the adequacy and authority of religious experience.

2. At the heart of the experience which was to furnish both source and norm for liberal theology was *the person of Jesus Christ.* Liberalism was through and through *Christocentric.*

3. *Loyalty to the historic faith.* In striking contrast to modernistic tendencies, liberalism was determined to maintain a position fully within the main stream of historic Christian development. This was accomplished by various devices of reinterpretation, mainly by a distinction

familiar to us all—the recognition of "abiding experiences in changing categories."

4. Yet evangelicalism was not mainly a theological development at all, but a resurgence of warm and vibrant spiritual life. Not only did it bring personal religion to birth within the lives of thousands, it lifted men's vision to the horizons of their world. It deepened their insight into the crass realities of their corporate life. It quickened their consciences to a thousand needs and injustices and opportunities. Above all, it fired them with unmeasured assurance of what, through them, the spirit of Christ might accomplish—here and now, in this generation, and in every aspect of mankind's life. The result was that, in less than half a century it gave birth to the most notable series of efforts for social improvement in Christian history—the modern foreign missionary movement; the social gospel; the Christian settlement and institutional church development; religious education; crusade after crusade for specific social reforms; finally, the movement for the reunion of the church of Christ, in America and throughout the world. It was an amazing, an unprecedented accomplishment.

IV

The inherently contradictory character of liberal Christianity is most clearly seen in its paradoxical results. On the one hand, its positive outreach and concrete accomplishment, to which we have just referred; but, on the reverse side of the ledger, we must face liberal Christianity's deficiencies. And, foremost, its failure in *self*-propagation—in bringing to birth in others, especially the children of its own households, the vibrant, dynamic, self-giving personal religion which was the powerhouse of all its mighty enterprises. Its outreach into new areas of life and new corners of the world was prodigious. Its capacity to reproduce its own vitality within the devotion of its own children was meager. That crucial weakness had its inevitable result in diminishing power in the life of the church. With all the amazing accomplishments of the church in the past half century, the period was marked, especially the later decades, by a quite unmistakable failing of strength. The clearest evidence of this we have already noted in its objective counterpart in the body politic, *the progressive secularization of American life.*

V

Against such a background, we come to confront our situation today. We have already noted the paradoxical character of liberal religion. But *paradox* is the essence of the contemporary scene in its every aspect.

The present crisis in civilization has laid bare the inner character of modern life, and it reveals it riddled with paradox. The age of man's supreme triumphs, the age which has set man at the center of the universe and has boasted of his unlimited power to construct a new world, is also the age of the progressive nervous disintegration of man's life—of steadily mounting numbers of nervous breakdowns; of veritable epidemics of suicides; of the mushroom-like growth of the new cure, psychiatry; of the overcrowding of insane asylums, mental hospitals and sanitaria; of the astounding vogue of new power-promising cults; and of a dozen other unmistakable signs of profound insecurity, unhealthiness and unhappiness of inner life. Something is drastically wrong with the interior health of men today.

It is quite unnecessary to point to the parallels in public life. Something is drastically wrong with the health of man's society. We face the paradox of the most advanced and self-confident civilization in human history paralyzed with impotence, shuddering with apprehension, apparently fated to destroy itself through war and economic and nationalistic folly.

And, when we turn to modern thought, the underlying assumptions upon which the whole impressive structure of the modern world has been reared, there, too, we confront paradox. Unbounded confidence in man's power to build a new world is giving way before grave uncertainty of man's ability to salvage the already crumbling remnants of his once proud domain. Trust in science and in education is superseded by apprehension lest the triumph of a scientific civilization may wreak the destruction of all civilization. Utopian expectations for mankind's future are now supplanted by gnawing fear for the continuance of even the essentials of civilized life. The regnancy of the intellectual premises and principles of the "modern mind" shudders under attacks which threaten to discredit every one of those cherished premises. Finally, the authority of the latest (the very essence of modernism) is being brushed aside before a profound hankering for the wisdom of the past.

Now, when we return once more to life and thought within the churches, we discern the paradoxical character of liberal Christianity in even sharper outline and with keener understanding. Clearly, recoil from liberalism is the most important feature of the present situation in Christian thought. We who are so close to the movement of reaction lack perspective fairly to appraise its justice and its validity. We can, however, record the alleged inadequacies. The main burden of the current criticism is simple enough. Christian thought in recent times, it is contended, has been deeply enmeshed within the dominant outlook of

the modern world. That whole outlook is now definitely discredited. Recent criticism and the advance of sound thinking have proven its premises unsound. The passage of public events has branded its expectations absurd. The whole outlook must be discarded; indeed, is already hopelessly obsolete. Liberal Christianity, its child, must likewise undergo drastic reconstruction if not abandonment.

VI

A first principle for understanding the thought of any day—not least one's own—is to recognize that dominant currents in human thought tend to swing, pendulum-fashion, in action and reaction, often from one exaggerated extreme to its opposite. The thought of the church tends to sway by the same sharp oscillations, mainly in response to, partly in reaction from, the dominant movements in the general thought of the day. Each pressure from current thought serves Christian apologetic as both corrective and corrosive. It discloses onesidedness and incompleteness in the then-prevailing Christian interpretations which it challenges. And it lures to onesidedness and incompleteness the new Christian interpretations which it demands.

These partial perspectives and onesided emphases are inevitable in Christian preaching. The weak and rudderless preacher echoes feebly the regnant enthusiasms of his people; his message scurries in precipitate and undignified embarrassment to bring "Christian truth" into acceptable conformity with the latest dogmas of secular thought. The stubborn and faithful shepherd stresses with equal unbalance the truths despised and rejected by current opinion. In some measure, such onesidedness is inevitable and justifiable. But in the inner theological conviction of the preacher, such onesidedness is inexcusable. For his loyalty is given, not to an aspect or segment of truth, but to God's truth in all its richness and fulness; not to "truth-for-today," but to truth eternal. To be sure, his practical task is to bring the power of God's truth upon the peculiar needs and aberrations of his own people and times. But, how shall he do this unless he first lay firm hold upon eternal truth itself?

This recognition should warn Christian faith in our day against a too ready hospitality to the dominant interests and emphases of current thought, even though they bring sound criticism and important corrective to recent theology. The initial step in forging a Christian message for today is to come to grips with the lurching extremes of both yesterday and today.

It is a truism that we stand in a moment of profound cultural and intellectual transition—one may almost say, cataclysm. Against two of

the most characteristic and inwoven features of modern thought we are in violent reaction—its individualism and its humanism, both forms of the deeper vice of abstraction.

Against this whole perspective our day rushes in headlong reaction. We see that individual man, solitary man, is a futile abstraction without reality, health or happiness; there is a rediscovery of the essentially corporate character of all true human existence, of man's life as fulfilling self only within the responsibilities and enrichments, the disciplines and obligations of his social nexus, i. e., a rediscovery of the reality of "community." And we see that mankind, divorced from and regnant over the cosmos, is an absurdity; there is a recognition of profound forces deeper and more powerful than rationality which link men to their animal ancestry, and through that to nature, and which determine the course of mankind's history far more than he rules them, i. e., a recognition of man's insignificance and impotence in the cosmos; for religious minds, a recognition of the transcendence and sovereignty of God.

It is in the light of this situation, and of the challenge and warning it brings to Christian faith, that we turn to some of the more important facets of a theology to sustain a relevant evangelism. I shall mention five:

VII

1. *The Primacy of Religion in Life.*[4] That is not its position today, either in the life of our times or even in the lives of the overwhelming majority of the church's adherents. Some of us have lived long enough to witness religion's passage, in this country, from a position of recognized centrality to one of importance but distinctly secondary importance, and then to the status of a quite incidental and peripheral concern. That prevailing position of religion today is altogether unreal. Religion may be untrue; in that case, it is vicious. It is never incidental. Religion is central, or it is nothing at all. For religion, in essence, deals with man's relation to the Ultimate and Regnant Reality. God, if there be a God, cannot be one among other more or less interesting facts in the universe. He must be the one primal and supreme Reality, in relation to which all others derive their existence and their meaning. Only when we so think of him are we really thinking of GOD. By the same token, since religion is man's relation to that utterly unique and primal Reality, religion must be a matter of central and utterly unique significance. When religion holds any other place in a man's or a church's or a community's or a generation's life, it is not religion with which we are having to do, but

[4] See *God in These Times*, pp. 67-76.

some cheap and inconsequential counterfeit for it is not relationship to God which is masquerading as religion

VIII

2. *The Priority of God in Religion.* Of first importance here, it is the most promising starting-point. For children of the humanistic, man-centered outlook of the modern world, there would seem to be little question. We should begin with the Sovereign of the universe, the God of all reality. Whenever wisdom guides our minds to sane humility, we recognize that we stand, every one of us, every moment of our lives, face to face with a majestic, mysterious Other whose dimensions we may never begin accurately to measure, whose precise nature and purpose we can never hope fully to comprehend. That recognition is the beginning of all true religion, as, in fact, it appears to have been the origin of man's primitive religion.[5]

This recognition is, also, the plain man's untutored assumption. It is Prof. A. E. Taylor, I think, who has said that if the question, "What are you most certain of?" were put to the man in the street—or, perhaps better, the man on the farm since he lives closer to nature and so to reality—after a moment's reflection he probably would reply, "Of three things, at least. Behind this universe, there is an Ultimate Power, God. There is a difference between right and wrong. The right deserves the absolute devotion of my life." The first conviction is the natural assumption of the plain man—that is, of anyone who looks out upon his world with native wisdom unclouded by too much learning, or distorted by sophistication. "Behind this universe, there is an Ultimate Power, God."

This recognition is, likewise, the conclusion of the best of contemporary learning. For I think we may say that the net result of the great speculations carried forward so earnestly by science in recent years is just this: Behind the universe, there is an Ultimate Cosmic Power, which religion terms God. So Prof. Kirtley Mather, of Harvard University—

> "That there is an Administration of the Universe cannot be denied. Something has determined and continues to determine the functioning of natural law, the orderly transformations of matter and energy. . . From one point of view the question, 'Is there a God?' is promptly and finally answered in the affirmative. . . The real question is, 'What sort of God is it which rules this world?'"

It is an old but sound saying, "The astronomer who is an atheist is mad."

Again, this recognition was the starting-point of our religion in its centuries-long pilgrimage toward its final and consummate faith. This

[5] See *The Plain Man Seeks for God,* Ch. IV.

was the sure certainty of the Old Testament figures, the indubitable reality of the Lord of heaven and earth. Job voiced their great soul-struggle. Not to believe in God? It never occurred to him to question that; but to be sure that the God whom he *must* acknowledge was also good, one whom he could fully trust. Indeed, we may say that the transition from the Old Testament conception of God to that of the New is precisely here—not the displacing of the God of the universe, the Sovereign of nature and of history, by a different God, the Father of Love; but the completion of the Old Testament perception by the certainty that the God of the universe, the Sovereign of nature and of history, is also the God of individual concern, the Father of Love and Redeemer of men. This fact should suggest to us the importance of both convictions in all our thought of God and of reaching the two convictions in this order. The route of the journey of our religion toward its final goal may well be the route of each Christian's personal pilgrimage toward his final faith.

If it be asked, Why is this starting-point in our thought of God so important? we may mention three invaluable gifts it brings:

The first is its gift of *surety,* of *certainty,* of *steadiness,* in our faith. For the recognition of God as the Ultimate Power behind the universe rests on evidence of unchallengeable objectivity. Precisely such evidence we require to keep our faith steady, secure, free from the fluctuations of mood.

Its second gift is *perspective.* It places our seeking and inquiring minds in true relation to the reality we yearn to fathom. *Perspective,* if not itself the giver of truth, is the absolute *sine qua non,* the indispensable equipment, without which truth cannot be come by. Perspective has close kinship with sense of humor. And sense of humor is one of the authentic pathways to truth and to God, although it has been pretty generally neglected by heavy-witted philosophers and theologians and the pious generally—except such shrewd and joyous saints as Francis; and even Jesus himself. And when perspective has restored our sense of humor, we are likely to surmise that something very much like a sense of humor must dwell within the Divine Soul also.

> "When they have proved that man is wholly clay
> And God a dream—listen, and far away
> From far beyond the utmost star whose light,
> Dark in the Distance, shines still out of sight,
> You shall hear gentle laughter, soft as tears,
> Such as wells up from human love that hears
> And watches, understandingly beguiled,
> The simple, brave complacence of a child."

A third gift which must follow after is *humility.*

To many queries concerning the precise nature or purpose of God, the mystery of life's tragedies, the fate of our society, the nature of the future life, we must reply, "I do not know." Or better, "I do not know—yet." That there is a God—that God is—no man with true perspective will ever really deny. But *what* God is, and how he disposes the mystery of each man's mortal pilgrimage, we shall never fully understand—at least in this life upon earth.

We have elected to make our start from one pole of men's perennial experience of God. But for Christian faith it is only a starting-point. Common sense leads us a further step. If there be a God at all, he must be the most living, regnant, potent of realities—an ever-present, ever-active, all-encompassing Reality which gives to our questing minds the impulse to seek him, making insistent and never-wearied impact upon them. He is the prior Provoker of all our seeking. Only if it be acknowledged that he must be so, will he ever be truly apprehended and made sure of. And so we are carried toward the other pole—towards the certainty that the Sovereign of the universe, the Ultimate Reality, is also altogether righteous and lovely, the Solicitous Friend and Redeemer of men. This is the culmination of the pilgrimage of Christian faith—within the assurance of the intimate concern of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IX

3. *The Centrality of Christ in Faith.* In a moment we shall speak of the necessity of that fulcrum for Christian belief. But first let us remind ourselves of the *practical* centrality of Christ in life; for the path by which men approach Christ is, as we all know, not theoretical, but very practical and very simple. Whither men's eyes rise unconsciously in the moment of life's purest aspiration shows what their hearts really worship. Whither their minds turn instinctively in time of deepest confusion shows where they have really found wisdom. Whither their spirits reach unfailingly in the hour of loneliness, defeat, or disgrace, shows whom they really trust. This is the revealing compass-needle of their faith. In any such circumstance, through unreasoned and irresistible inward compulsion, we would discover ourselves turning and directing our people to Jesus Christ. He is, in fact, the fulcrum of our existence.

"Whoso has felt the spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny;
Yea, with one voice, O World, tho' thou deniest
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I."

But he is also the fulcrum of our thought. For the whole vast structure of Christian conviction turns upon a dual certainty: Man is made in the image of God, so that to think of God in terms drawn from man's highest experience is, quite literally, to think of him less inadequately than in any other way; and in that one of our humanity in whom man's true being has come to fulfilment God himself is present, so that he who sees him sees the Father also. From this dual conviction, everything that is vital, everything essential, in Christian faith proceeds.

But who and what is this Reality, central and determinative for Christian faith? What are the dimensions and nature of the fact of Jesus Christ? Here, there is time to propose only one consideration, but a consideration of immense consequence for our message. The "fact of Jesus Christ"—the central and normative reality for both faith and life, is the total impact of Jesus Christ upon history, not merely "the man, Jesus of Nazareth," or "the Founder of the Christian Church," or "the Living Christ of faith," or "the Christ of inner experience"; but all of them together as various and successive phases of a single organic personal reality, *Jesus Christ-in-the-life-of-the-world.* The Christ of the centuries reveals the power of that Reality; only in the light of what Jesus became to men after his death, what indeed he already was to those who troubled to record his life, and of all that issued and still flows from him, can his human life be read aright and truly understood. But—and this is perhaps the more important truth for us today—Jesus of Nazareth defines the *authenticity* of that Reality. The Christ of Christian history and of present experience should never be thought of except through the clear lineaments of the words and deeds and spirit of the man, Jesus of Nazareth. All that is truly Christ is unmistakably continuous with that life; all else is secondary and dubious accretion.

This is important for us because, in these latter years particularly, under the spell of the latest vogue of New Testament criticism, there has been some disposition to claim that the words, acts and mind of the historic Jesus are not greatly important. Indeed, we must dispense with them, we are told, because we can never know him. Thus one of the ablest Christian scholars of our day in a popular book of very wide reading declares:

> "At the source of Christianity in Palestine there was a very remarkable and attractive personality of some kind, but all imaginative reconstructions of that personality based upon our fragmentary data must be highly conjectural. . .
>
> "As a figure calculated to inspire men to heroic acts of self-sacrifice, it may be doubted whether the figure of Jesus, if detached from what Christians have believed about him, is adequate."

That is rank and unpardonable heresy, however respectable the standing of the author! Upon the insight of some scholars, even the greatest, one is tempted to bring Masefield's stinging indictment:

> "The trained mind outs the upright soul,
> As Jesus said the trained mind might,
> Being wiser than the sons of light.
> But trained men's minds are spread so thin
> They let all sorts of darkness in;
> Whatever truth man finds, they doubt it.
> They love, not truth, but talk about it."

And the fog of the scholar is belied by the insight of the "upright soul" who, picking up the plain tale of the Gospels in his pitiable naïvete, still finds himself gripped by a living Man of history, who not only stands out upon the record with remarkable clarity but even reaches forth from the record to conscript the devotion of his soul.

Here is the test of what is essential and authentic in Christian tradition and belief. There is nothing essential in Christian faith—nothing—which is not congruous with, indeed implicit in, the recorded faith of Jesus of Nazareth. What is else may be true and useful; it is secondary and accessory; and it is suspect until it has demonstrated intrinsic kinship with the mind of Christ.

Again, here is the core and essence of our message to men. Wise counsel, then, is: Preach Jesus; preach Jesus of Nazareth! It may be that through your portraiture of him men may be borne along the course of his first followers, from companioning with the Man of history to awakening to the Living Comrade, to trusting all to the Eternal Presence. For the only God whom we would have men know is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. If they are to make sure of him, it will be through deepening trust in the faith of Jesus Christ. That is not a bad beginner's definition of Christian faith—faith in the faith of Jesus of Nazareth. They will know God—through Jesus Christ, their Lord.

X

4. *The Cruciality of the Church.*[6] It is hardly too much to say that, like "community" in secular thought, "the church" has suddenly become the pivotal word in contemporary Christianity. The reasons for this are numerous—most of them rooted in the current reaction from the individualism, subjectivism, shallowness, man-centered egoism of the passing age:

(*a*) A frank admission of personal barrenness and inadequacy.

(*b*) A reflection of the temper of the age.

[6] See *Journal of Religion*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, October, 1937, pp. 410ff.

(*c*) The renaissance of worship.

(*d*) A rediscovery of the riches of Christian tradition.

(*e*) The search for a new and firmer ground of authority.

(*f*) Response to alarming developments in the impact of contemporary events upon the existence of the Christian movement—secular movements rooted in quasi-religious faiths; the precarious needs of the younger churches of the mission fields; the threat to deeply rooted Christianity in Russia, Germany, Japan, and elsewhere.

(*g*) The earnest reaching out for a united, ecumenical Christianity.

But the reviving interest in the church has still a deeper source. It springs, in part, from a new understanding of the true nature of man and of his salvation, and from a fresh apprehension of the genius of our religion. We comprehend more clearly the essentially social character of all true life of the spirit. The whole idea of a personal, individual religion is seen to be self-deceived. The Christian faith can be comprehended in its fulness only by attention to its continuing life, growth and travail in the church which is "his Body." By the same token, the Christian life can be apprehended by the individual, never "in his solitariness," but only as his life is guided, chastened, strengthened, and redeemed within the community of his fellows. Man may find both himself and God only within a spiritual fellowship of mutual loyalty and responsibility. The church is the imperfect foretaste of the Family of God which is his ideal intention for us all.

XI

5. We come, at the end, to a premise of most private and personal meaning for each one of us, but of incalculable importance for our life as ministers. In the familiar language of theology, it is "the prevenience of God," but in the homely faith of the practical pastorate, it is the assurance, the absolute certainty, that in all our labors the Spirit of the Living God, which bloweth where it listeth so that no man can tell the ways thereof, not only accompanies us but precedes us and follows after us.

It is at once the supreme aggravation and the salvation of the ministry that measurement of effectiveness, or certainty of results, is absolutely impossible. The parable of the Sower, even if spoken early in Jesus' ministry, is the consummate portrait of the Lord's own ministry and of that of his ministers. One sows, another waters, but God himself, and God alone, giveth increase. The Christian minister, his whole life through, is at the almost single business of sowing; incessantly, tirelessly, undiscourageably; not alone with spoken word, but in act, attitude,

and aspiration. But the character of the soil, its barrenness, its fallowness, is never certain; and there is hidden and sudden fallowness which is neither expected nor discerned; and the ultimate fruitage is completely unknown. Two certainties only sustain his sowing:

(*a*) *The Omnipresence of Human Need.* In every parish, on every day, there are one, two, three more lives, hard up against a crucial, decisive, life-determining crisis; homes threatened with imminent collapse; interior problems of most pressing and poignant kinds; spirits hovering on the brink of moral or nervous breakdown. Every single day, every one of us rubs shoulders with a half-dozen persons for whom *today* is the hour of fateful decision. That this is so, we know. Who they may be, we never fully know.

(*b*) *The Omnipresence of God,* not merely his prevenience, but his convenience and his postvenience. It was one of the greatest missionaries who testified that he had never sought to bring the Christian gospel to a stranger without discovering that God had been there before him. He precedes us in our word and in our deed. He accompanies the word and deed with power and healing and influence which are not in them. And he follows in their train, ofttimes working an effect, utterly unexpected and even unnoted. Here is the true glory of the Christian ministry—the absolute certainty of the ceaseless, inscrutable, undiscernible alchemy of the Living God.

And to those who so conceive their calling and who lay firm grip upon its deeper meaning, there comes with equal certainty the unfailing promise:

"Lo, I am with thee alway, even unto the end of the world."

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS [1]

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One hundred years ago last July Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered an address before the Senior Class in the Harvard Divinity School that is often referred to as the greatest religious message ever voiced in America. He concluded his remarks on the high note of earnest expectation that mankind would ere long discover that the spiritual laws of the world were in harmony with its physical laws. "I look," he said, "for the new Teacher that shall follow so far those shining laws that he shall see them come full circle; shall see their rounding complete grace; shall see the world to be the mirror of the soul; shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart; and shall show that the Ought, that Duty, is one thing with Science, with Beauty, and with Joy."

Scientific research, during the century which has elapsed since Emerson's prophetic utterance, has revealed to us many a "shining law" that he could not possibly have foreseen. The ways of nature are far more complicated and intricate than even a Darwin or a Pasteur ever dreamed them to be. No one seeker after truth and righteousness can hope to follow all the highways of science until they come full circle. The Teacher for whom Emerson looked cannot be an individual; he must be a composite of many individuals, a veritable host of countless number, a glorious army of those who each in his own way contributes to the "rounding out" of knowledge and the comprehension of the duty of man.

It is, however, apparent that the advancing knowledge gained by scientific research reveals the fundamental unity of the universe. The laws of nature are related to each other; they are not disparate and uncoordinated. In all the transformations of matter and energy there is something that integrates the various processes and coordinates the many results. To follow any one principle of nature, any law of the universe, until it comes full circle is, therefore, to discover some essential part of the underlying administrative reality.

Recognition of this scientific view of the universe involves the acceptance of the fact that man is a part of nature, that in a very real sense we are "sons of the earth." The ancient Hebrew philosophers were on the right track when they described mankind as originating from the

[1] Address delivered at Crozer Theological Seminary, June 5, 1939.

dust of the ground as well as thrilled with the breath of God. The modern student of geologic life development restates that theme when he characterizes the human species as one of many threads woven to make the tapestry of life—a golden thread, perhaps, shining from a drab background, but none the less an integral part of the whole.

It involves also the abandonment of the pre-scientific concept of a three-story universe—heaven above, earth around and hell beneath—with different regulations governing affairs on the different levels. No longer can we think of man as a creature from another sphere of activity, dwelling temporarily in surroundings that are really foreign to his nature. The earth is his home and here he must work out his destiny under the same regulations as those that pertain to all other earthly creatures.

This fundamental concept of the unity of the universe justifies and is validated by the large amount of scientific research that has been done concerning the behavior of animals other than man but directed toward the welfare of man himself. With the other creatures of the earth we share many of our characteristics, functions, and reactions. Seeking the lowest common denominator of all the desires, impulses, urges, and ambitions displayed by living creatures, high and low, complex and simple, we find one basic striving. Wherever life is observed, there is found the desire to keep on living, to perpetuate one's kind, to maintain existence regardless of the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." This is indeed the essential characteristic which distinguishes the living from the non-living. For at least six hundred million years of earth history, since the beginning of the fossil record, life has triumphed in this endeavor. Individuals have died, species have become extinct, threads have been snipped by "the shears of fate," whole strands have been cut off, but the weaving of the tapestry of life has never ceased. Somehow, somewhere, the forces of the living have moved ahead; over, under, around, or through, the procession has carried on.

Mankind shares with other creatures this vital urge. From the point of view of natural history, righteousness is that conduct or behavior which is conducive to the maintenance of existence for the particular kind of creature with which we may for the moment be concerned. This may well prove to be only a part of righteousness, but it is at best the only part with which natural science can deal and at the least it is obviously an extremely important part of the whole. So to live as individuals in such manner as to contribute to the long-continuing existence of human beings is an aim worthy of the highest commendation.

How, then, can man maintain his existence on the earth for geologic periods to come? It is a question far easier to ask than to answer. But

the very asking of the question is indicative of the acceptance of the now obvious fact that man is still on trial. He may be the latest product of the creative process, but there is no reason to assume that he is the last. Like dinosaurs or sabre-tooth tigers he may have his day and cease to be. Only as he demonstrates his worth may he expect his kind to be preserved.

From the physical point of view, however, he has little to fear. This may be the reason for the complacent sense of security that led him long ago to think that his mastery of the earthly environment was beyond challenge and that indeed he occupied a unique position at the very center of the universe. The geologist turns from the long perspective of earth history, with its hundreds of millions of years during which this planet has been a comfortable abode for living creatures, to an equally long perspective for the future. All available data indicate that the earth will continue for many millions of years to be a pleasant place for life as we know it. The time available for man in which to work out his destiny is practically limitless.

There will doubtless be many and drastic changes in the physical conditions at the earth's surface. Another glacial period may well be in the offing; plains or even uplands may be sunk beneath the sea; new mountain ranges may rise as barriers to existing air currents; the polar regions may be freed from their mantles of ice and once more be clothed with lush vegetation. But such changes in environment should hold no terrors for mankind. Our collateral ancestors, the Neanderthalers, weathered at least one ice age during their couple hundred thousand years of existence, and certainly we are far more capable of coping with such untoward circumstances than they. Moreover, man differs from all other creatures in one respect which happens to be of great significance in this connection. Most animals have gained security by adaptation to the local and temporary environment; thus they have become specialists in some one mode of life. But man has specialized in adaptability rather than in adaptation. He and he alone can live as he pleases, on the frigid mountaintop or in the torrid valley; beneath the surface of the sea or high in the air; in the steaming jungle or on the arid desert. Changes in the environment cannot prove to be a death sentence for him, as they were for many of his predecessors in the geologic past.

But this ability to flout the physical environment has been gained by the use of things—iron and lead, cotton and hemp, petroleum and coal. Modern civilization with its gadgets and machines has made mankind more than ever dependent upon the physical resources provided by the earth. Will the supply be adequate to the demand? Without going into

the many details concerning the known reserves of the non-renewable resources, the trend in population statistics, and such matters, it suffices for the moment to note that the data now available point unmistakably to the generalization that there is an abundance of the needed raw materials. There is enough and to spare to provide every human being likely to appear on the face of the earth with all that is required to make life comfortable, at least for several thousand years to come. Mother Earth has given mankind a wonderfully rich heritage; again there is no ground for fear as we face the future.

This, however, is not equivalent to saying that man may confidently expect to continue unchanged as the dominant form of life upon the earth for an indefinitely long period of time. The record of the past is unmistakable; mere continuity of existence is not enough; changes in human nature are inevitable. It is true that less complicated creatures may persist unchanged for tens of millions of years; many lowly invertebrates have left a fossil record extending over such periods of time as that. Such highly complex organisms as certain of the social insects have, moreover, persisted with little or no change for several million years. But among the mammals, the group of complexly organized creatures to which man belongs, there is no record of any species which persisted for more than a few hundred thousand years without displaying such profound structural modifications that the scientist records the advent of a new species. Apparently, on this higher level of organic development, the quest for security involves frequent change in form and function. Stagnation means destruction; only progressive change to meet the changing demands of a dynamic world can bring success.

With such thoughts in mind it is readily apparent that the demands with which man is now concerned are localized in the area of social relationships. The physical problems which he encountered in the earlier phases of human history have been solved, but this brings him all the more forcefully into bruising contact with psychical and spiritual problems, the solution of which is essential to his continued existence on this planet. The critical question for the twentieth century is: how can two or three billion human beings be satisfactorily organized for the wise use and equitable distribution of resources which are abundant enough for all but are unevenly scattered over the face of the earth? Inasmuch as the very existence of mankind depends upon finding and applying the correct answer to this question, righteousness from the point of view of natural history is to be appraised according to the individual's success in solving this particular, but far-reaching, problem.

Fortunately, the attempt to live righteously, as righteousness is thus

defined, puts one in harmony with the administration of the universe. For the very essence of administration is organization. Electrons, neutrons, and protons are organized into atoms, atoms into molecules, molecules into compounds; some of the compounds prove to be cells, and these are organized to form individual plants and animals. Latest of all in the history of creative evolution certain individuals have been organized into societies. Transcending all that has gone before is the development of the human society, obviously the most difficult but at the same time potentially the most glorious organization yet attempted.

Two antagonistic alternatives present themselves as the possible bases for this organization. The issue between the two has never before been so clearly drawn as it is today. The social group, whether it be the family, the industrial or commercial company, or the political unit, may be organized on the principle of regimentation, or it may be developed according to democratic principles. Both methods are being tried under a variety of conditions and each has something to be said in its favor. But both cannot be equally conducive to the continuing existence of mankind, and one or the other must be selected as the basis of righteousness.

If regimentation be the choice, then the great mass of humankind must be trained for obedience—blind, unquestioning, but superbly skilful obedience. The educator, Christian or otherwise, becomes the intellectual and spiritual counterpart of the drill-sergeant in the army. This is no menial task, nor is its objective a mean one. Skill is a commodity of which there is never likely to be an oversupply. On the other hand, if democracy be the choice, the great mass of humankind must be trained for wise, self-determined cooperation. Precisely those qualities of mind and heart which have long been extolled in Christian doctrine must be developed to the fullest possible extent. Not only skill but also the ability to govern oneself, the eternal prerequisite for freedom, must be developed in each member of the group.

In so far as physical existence is concerned, there would seem to be little or no choice between the two alternatives. Perhaps human nature being what it is today, the regimentation of society may temporarily be the more efficient method. But the full circle of organic law embraces more than mere existence. From the continuity of the evolutionary process there has emerged a creature who is aware of the vivid values in life, that may be found beyond the goods necessary for comfortable existence. Ideas and ideals are powerful determining factors in the world today and among them the ideal of freedom for the individual in the midst of social restraint is the most vital and compelling of all. Though

it baffle our scientific tools for measurement and transcend our efforts to explain, it is none the less a reality.

It is in the yearning for freedom, the love of beauty, the search for truth, the recognition of moral law, and the awareness of spiritual forces that human nature is distinguished from all other sorts of nature. Man shares with other animals the need for satisfactory economics, for adequate food and shelter, for the goods essential to existence, but his needs transcend these physical factors because his nature differs from theirs. Probably nine-tenths of all the words that have been used in reference to "human nature" since the dawn of speech have referred to those elements in the nature of man that are shared with other animals rather than to those that are man's unique possession. It would be far better to concentrate upon the latter and thus to distinguish human nature from animal nature.

Regimentation may be good for man as an animal; through that type of social organization his needs for goods may be efficiently supplied. But regimentation is certainly not good for human nature as thus distinguished. Experience verifies what wisdom foresees; regimentation stultifies the spirit, destroys personality, standardizes thought and action. Worst of all, regimentation means stagnation of the creative process and, as we have seen, stagnation ends in extinction. If man attempts to live by bread alone, mankind commits collective suicide. Apparently the best, and perhaps the only chance for mankind to succeeed in the quest for security is through progress in the art of living on a high spiritual plane rather than to stress exclusively the science of existence on a purely physical level.

Rounding the circle thus, it becomes apparent that the ideal of Christian brotherhood is just as much an expression of the nature of the administration of the universe as is the law of gravitation. That ideal is not something that has been created by visionary idealists; it is instead a discovery made by thorough-going realists intelligent enough to see in advance the consequences of varying modes of action. It is a part of the regulations pertaining to the sort of world which scientific research has revealed our world to be. Apparently, the world being what it is, the brightest hope for the continuing existence of mankind lies in the attainment of that ideal.

Those who accept the evolutionary principle of the creative process sometimes fall into an easy error in this connection. Man has arisen from so lowly an origin as the dust of the ground until he has displayed that there is also in his make-up something of the spirit of God. Therefore, it is sometimes assumed, further progress is inevitable; his evolu-

tion must continue to even higher levels of attainment. Unfortunately such optimism is not justified by the record of the past. Many a creature before him has shown remarkable progress for a time, only to come at last to the end of its road, there to find itself in a blind alley from which there was no escape. The fact is that evolution never guarantees progress, it only guarantees opportunity. And its opportunities must be capitalized while there is yet time; if neglected they are withdrawn.

Surveying the procession of living creatures which has streamed down the corridors of time in the last six hundred million years, it is not egotistic to conclude that the opportunity now open to mankind is the greatest opportunity ever offered to any creature. Here is a species of mammal which has learned how to solve the problem of existence. It has freed itself from environmental control to an extent not even approached by any other creature. It is in very truth the master of the organic world, capable of decreeing life or death to any species of animal or plant, not excluding itself. Having learned how to exist, it may now turn its attention to the problem of living. From earning a living it may now lift its eyes to the joy of living a life. Even the hard-boiled scientist may hear an echo from Galilean hillsides: "I came that ye might have life and have it more abundantly." "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect."

But this is only an opportunity. Men may seize it or pass it by, just as they please. This absence of certainty concerning the future of mankind comes as a disappointment to some. On more mature thought, however, it reveals itself as a real tribute to human nature. Because of it, man is burdened and blessed with a large share of responsibility for determining his own destiny. He is promoted to an executive position in the firm. He is admitted to close fellowship with the administration.

The absence of certainty is also a tribute to the wisdom and integrity of that administration. Only thus can the objective be attained. For the creative process is not mechanical; there is nothing automatic about its product. The process depends upon education and persuasion, rather than coercion and force. Its objective is intelligent good-will, operating freely. In such an administration, a man may have confidence. To it he can bring not merely respect, but love and adoration.

COMMON DENOMINATORS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY [1]

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THE sentinels upon the walls of Zion are beset on every side by multitudes who cry, "Watchman, what of the night! Tell us its signs of promise!" For these are dreadful times and the world is troubled with crisis morals, crisis economics, crisis nationalism, crisis internationalism, and crisis theology.

The watchmen peer into the surrounding darkness. They can scarcely cry, "The morning comes," but they do see a faint glow on the eastern horizon—the churches are concerned about getting together; they are seeking a basis of united action; they are talking much about ecumenicity; they are conferring as to their mutual interests and tasks. Their principal problem is to find common ground on which they can get together.

Before much progress can be made toward Christian unity, the various denominations must realize that they are but fractions of the Christian Church. The slogan, "Let the Church be the Church" must have a broad interpretation. If the comrades of Roger Williams say, "Let the Baptist Church be the Church"; if the followers of John Wesley insist, "Let the Methodist Church be the Church"; if the adherents of the House of Bishops demand, "Let the Episcopal Church be the Church," the ecumenical movement will be doomed from the start.

As in solving mathematical problems, so in promoting church unity, fractions must be brought together by finding their common denominators. This is the difficult quest of those who take seriously their obligation to help answer the prayer of Jesus, "that they all may be one." It seems to be an unending task. Like the father whose boy wanted help in finding the common denominator of several fractions, we are tempted to ask, "Haven't they found that thing yet? they were looking for it when I was a boy."

When we join in the search for common bases of Christian belief and action, we must not forget that interest in these matters is not confined to theologians and ecclesiastics. Church members in increasing numbers are eager to understand and ready to help solve the problems involved. These interested Christians should be kept in mind by writers on current theological questions who venture to hope that their works may be commended by the Book-of-the-Month Club. While the danger of oversim-

[1] Matriculation address, Crozer Theological Seminary, October 2, 1939.

plifying these problems may be real, no one need fear the consequences of making the language used in discussing them simple and clear.

A step, at least, in this direction could well be made in the matter of the frequent use of quotations from other languages. While the number of readers who can understand the numerous Latin, German, and French quotations which besprinkle the pages of so many of our modern books of importance may be increasing, the number of readers who are interested in these works who cannot understand such quotations is growing much more rapidly. The removal of Latin from the required list of studies in most of our American colleges, and the foolish prohibition of the study of German in our public schools during the World War, have left many studious and thoughtful people without the ability to translate these foreign phrases. While no one would wish to cramp the style of those who find it difficult to say exactly what they mean in the language in which they are writing, the average reader does not wish to be disturbed too often by linguistic hurdles which he cannot take. Unobtrusive footnotes, giving translations, would help him over these barriers, and allay the suspicion that the writer had placed the obstacles there for vanity's sake.

The contrast between the organic union once possessed by the church and its divided condition today may cause discouragement, until it is remembered that its vaunted unity was dependent upon force. It had a totalitarian ecumenicity, which could not endure then and would be impossible now. The only hope for a united church in our time is through an ecumenicity of freedom, not of compulsion.

When we come to search for the common denominators which will make it possible to unite the fractional parts of the Christian church, there are two sources of information upon which we must depend: the Bible and Christian history—the source materials of our religion and its records. These reveal the reasons for the divisions among Christians, and must furnish helps for their healing.

Reliance upon the Scriptures as authority in religion did not come into being with the Reformation. Fruitful soil for this dependence is found in the attitude of the Jews toward the Old Testament. The words of Jesus reflect it: "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished." The writings of Paul emphasize it: "What advantage then hath the Jew, . . Much every way: first of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God."

Human nature leans hard upon authority, and so depends much upon getting exact instructions. A negro pastor, who had brought a truck to a neighboring church to take away a pipe-organ which had been given

to his congregation, looked at the pile of pipes and reeds, pedals and trackers, stops and keys, and said, "Is there a book goes with this organ?"

Luther and his fellows confronted a universal church which had established its own traditions and decrees as authority above the Bible and human conscience. If the Reformation was to be a success, appeal must be made to some authority higher than the church. The Scriptures were looked upon as having some binding force already; the Reformation exalted them to the place of supreme authority. They were accepted as such by Protestants generally. This, with the development of the idea of the right of private interpretation, opened the way for the division of Protestantism into its many sects.

Christian history clearly shows that membership in the church does not necessarily mean the crucifixion of the old man with his desires. The Roman Church furnished many examples of those who lived saintly lives; but its record is blackened by purges and persecutions which make modern dictators seem merciful. When Protestants gained the upper hand, persecution did not cease, but gradually changed its weapons from carnal to spiritual. Divisions were multiplied because of the assurance of each group that its own interpretations of Scripture were the final and authoritative pronouncements of God. In all of this they were confident that they were "doing God service." The contribution made by the Bible and Christian history toward the promotion of Christian unity should appear, at least in part, as we seek to find the factors which may help solve the problem of uniting divided Protestantism.

The necessary limits of this discussion compel its restriction to the four divisions into which it naturally falls—Faith, Order, Life, and Work. In the case of each of these, there is a sharp difference of opinion which presents at once the problem which must be solved. The Conference at Oxford in July, 1937, gave its attention to Life and Work; the one at Edinburgh in August of the same year, dealt with Faith and Order. The findings of these councils, representing non-Roman Christians from forty-five countries of the world, must have serious consideration in any present-day discussion of the problem of church unity.

Faith

At Lausanne, in 1927, and again at Edinburgh, in 1937, there were conference members who felt that the historic Apostles' and Nicene Creeds provided the means for bringing divided Protestantism together. While many would agree to this, others could not accept it. Before the gates of the new fellowship are closed against them, some facts about these creeds should be taken into account.

The origin of the creed popularly ascribed to the apostles, is shrouded in obscurity. Like Topsy, it seems to have "just growed." The idea that the apostles agreed upon a doctrinal statement known later as the "Old Roman Creed" cannot be shown to be true. While the received text of the Apostles' Creed may have spread from Rome, it was only after important changes and interpretations had been made.

The same thing is true of the Nicene Creed. Although its history began at the Council of Nicea, some of its important statements did not receive their final form until the Council of Chalcedon, one hundred and twenty-six years later, and it was not until five more centuries had passed that it came to be as it is today.

Another important thing to be remembered is that these creeds came into being during periods of fierce controversy in the church. Over these doctrinal statements there were bitter conflicts. Friendships were destroyed, homes broken, churches split, and those who would not accept the decrees of the councils were persecuted even unto death. It was the common practice to close these crystallized declarations concerning the grace of God with anathemas against those who disagreed with them.

Since these ancient creeds were avowedly drawn from the Scriptures, it seems within the bounds of propriety to suggest, in view of the extended time taken, and the unchristian strife engendered in their formation, that we return to the original source to find common denominators for Christianity. When we undertake this we have available the results of a thousand years of study of the Bible. The modern historical and critical approach to the Scriptures has opened the way for an unbiased examination of the bases of theistic and Christian beliefs as set forth in the "historic Creeds."

These great symbols of the Christian faith were formulated a millenium and more ago. They reflect the social conditions, political ideas, and religious philosophies of their day. They are fully appreciated only as they are studied from this point of view, but they are not a set mold for the religious conditions of today.

Reality is abiding; our explanations of it are tentative. Einstein gives the sum of his ideas of the physical universe in a few pages of formulæ said to be understood by only a dozen other men. This does not bring much light to the remaining fifteen hundred millions of us, but serves to emphasize the fact that while the nature of the physical universe remains the same, our theories concerning it are constantly changing. Time was when an atom was the "smallest divisible part of matter"; now it is a little universe of force, with a proton as its sun and electrons as its satellites. This infinitesimal vortex of power is represented

by some to be the next thing to spiritual; nevertheless, a brick dropped on your head will crack your skull as aforetime, and these same units of non-material force may combine to poison as well as nourish you.

Current tendencies in thinking are illustrated in a notable series of articles appearing in *The Christian Century* under the general title "How My Mind Has Changed in This Decade." The well-known leaders in religious thought and life who contribute to this symposium do not merely record these changes, but strike a note of certainty which heartens those who believe that the only sure foundation for human brotherhood is faith in God. "The major convictions of our religion seem to me," writes Dean Sperry, "to be truths wrought into the fabric of the universe." Bishop Kern likewise says, "God may be delayed, but he is not defeated. The structure of the moral universe is on his side and we may look to a return to a theism . . . resting upon the inexorable moral law which is the expression in life of the justice and love of the living God." In the same strain, Dr. Stanley Jones declares, "I see that this kingdom (of God) is written into the very constitution of things, that its laws are identical with the laws of our make-up, that life will work only in God's way and in no other."

While the world at large may consider the existence of God a matter for question and dispute, it is not to any great extent a cause of division among Christians. The various sections of the church would doubtless be willing to agree upon the statement made by the writer to the Hebrews: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

When it comes to the questions centering about the divinity and humanity of Jesus, we find that Christians have been divided from the early days of the church. The Epistles of John attack Docetism, and by the time of Constantine the contention over these matters was so great as to compel the emperor to intervene. The great councils of the church were supposed to have settled them, but they will not down, and in spite of the creedal pronouncements of the various Christian bodies, they are pressing questions today.

While there is no need, in this discussion, to go into these controversies in detail, something should be suggested as to what might be common ground for Christian comity in this area. The Edinburgh Conference of 1937 instructed its Continuation Committee "to give approval to the completed plan" for the World Council of Churches, only on condition that appointments made to membership in its Commission on Faith and Order should be from "the churches which fall within the terms of the Faith and Order invitation as addressed to 'all Christian bodies throughout the world which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and

Saviour.'" So dogmatism thwarts love. Should the doors of fellowship be closed to any who willingly confess Jesus Christ to be their Saviour and Lord?

Order

When we come to consider the matters usually included under the term "Order" we find ourselves somewhat in confusion, and are almost ready to conclude that we are dealing with "disorder." How shall the Head carry out his will through his body, the church, when the advocates of the congregational, episcopal, and presbyterial systems contend so valiantly for their own forms of administration, and there is no general agreement as to the number, nature, and valid observance of the sacraments, nor as to the nature and functions of the ministry?

Most of these differences of opinion rest back upon the views held as to apostolic succession. The statement made at Edinburgh concerning this matter, through the section on "Ministry and Sacraments," is quoted here because of its comprehensive character.

The Apostolic Succession has been, and is, understood in various ways. It has been thought of as the succession of bishops in the principal sees of Christendom, handing down and preserving the Apostles' doctrine. In addition to this succession in office, there has been a succession of bishops by laying-on of hands.

From early times this double succession has been associated with the stewardship of the sacraments, and is regarded by certain churches as constituting the true and only guarantee of sacramental grace and right doctrine. Others cherish the same values manifested in a succession of ordination by presbyteries duly constituted and exercising episcopal functions, and in the succession of presbyters in charge of parishes, with special emphasis on the true preaching of the Word and the right administration of the sacraments. Others consider the succession to mean the transmission from generation to generation of the authority of ministerial oversight over both clergy and laity in the Church, and they regard it as both a symbol and a bond of unity. Others interpret Apostolic Succession as meaning essentially, or even exclusively, the maintenance of the Apostles' witness through the true preaching of the gospel, the right administration of the sacraments and the perpetuation of the Christian life in the Christian community. In every case Churches treasure the Apostolic Succession in which they believe.

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Comprehensive union must involve the fullest mutual recognition, each Church humbly acknowledging that there are gifts belonging to others which would be of benefit to the whole Church.

If the ministry of the united church should sufficiently include characteristic elements from the episcopal, presbyterial, and congregational systems, the present adherents of those systems would have mutually recognized each other's places in the Church of God, all would be able to find a spiritual home in the united Church, and the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession would, upon a common basis of faith, attain the fulness which belongs to it by comprehending at once the Word, the ministry and the sacraments, and the life of the Christian community.[2]

[2] From *The Second World Conference on Faith and Order.* Edited by Leonard Hodgson. By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

In the New Testament there is one clear word which sheds a flood of light on this matter of church order. It was spoken by Peter when he had been taken to account for having trespassed the bounds of sacred propriety by associating with Cornelius and his fellow Gentiles, preaching to them, and admitting them to the rite of baptism. What he said reveals the basic principle for Christian unity: "If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?" Why should we be more particular than God?

Life

From time immemorial adherents of religion have been divided over the question as to their relation to the world. The dualistic idea that the flesh is evil influenced Christian thinking, as is shown by such expressions from Paul as, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." To the popular mind the familiar triumvirate of evil is "the world, the flesh, and the devil."

As in the day when Jesus used the simile of the children playing in the market-place, so today there are those who regard life as a funeral, and others who look upon it as a wedding. Some Christians are ascetic in their thought and life. They set out to mortify the flesh. They fast often and delight in doing penance. They long for the monastic life. They forsake the world and live by strict regulations. Some of them will not vote or hold public office. They look upon celibacy as a higher state than marriage. They deny themselves normal pleasures. The music of their lives is in a minor key.

On the other hand, there are many Christians who believe that the heavenly Father has given them "richly all things to enjoy." They do not think things are wrong just because they like to do them. Their motto is, "Rejoice evermore." The affairs of the state are of real concern to them. They do not neglect their social duties. The experiences of family life are valued by them. Whatever is normal they regard as right. Their bodies do not appear to them to be "vile," but are looked upon as the "temple of the Holy Ghost."

Humanity is related to sin in three ways: through heredity, which gives the basis for the doctrine of native depravity; by being part of a sinful social order, in the unrighteousness of which all are involved in spite of anything they may do; and through the commission of acts of sin, to which mankind is so universally prone. The sinlessness of Jesus is in this last area. How he can be rescued from the taint of original sin or relieved of his share of responsibility for corporate evil, seems to be beyond human ken. The names of his progenitors as given in the New

Testament certainly do not guarantee an immaculate conception for him. The Roman Catholic Church has tried to get around the difficulty by assuming an immaculate conception for his mother, but Protestant theologians have not been willing to accept this groundless solution of the problem. The Roman Government was far from perfect and, as one of its constituents, he must have been involved in its shortcomings. When he gave the command, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's," he made a requirement that could not be carried out in that nation, nor in any other short of the kingdom of God. This did not seem to disturb him, for he told his disciples they were the "salt of the earth," and the "light of the world."

Surely we have here common ground for the union of all who call Jesus, Lord. Whether they conceive of the Christian life in terms of self-abasement, or of self-expression, their purpose is the same, to become the best Christians they can and to bring the greatest blessing possible to the world through seasoning and illuminating human life.

Work

The question which Paul had to face when he was halted on his way to Damascus is one which continually confronts the Christian Church. "What shall I do, Lord?" Paul had the advantage of receiving specific directions; the church has never been able to agree as to just what its instructions are.

Multitudes of Christians are convinced that the world is so corrupt that there is no hope for its redemption. The best that can be done is to save a few brands from the burning and await the coming of the Son of man in majesty to overthrow evil and establish the kingdom of righteousness. They contend, with much evidence to support them, that this is the teaching of Jesus, that it presents the point of view of the New Testament, and that it is borne out by the woful condition into which the world is in the habit of getting itself.

Countless other Christians emphasize another side of the teachings of Jesus. They call attention to the parables of the intensive and extensive growth of the Kingdom; to the promise of a Comforter who shall abide with them always; to the long reach of the Great Commission; and to the fact that history has not seen the fulfilment of the prediction that there were some standing in the presence of Christ who would in no wise taste of death till they saw the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

How is it possible to bring together those who adhere to such widely separate views? Why not take a leaf from the history of the early church? Evidently it took literally the predictions of a speedy return of

its Master. The Christian group at Jerusalem established a communistic society which drew upon the capital of its members in a way which meant disaster in the long run. Since the time was short, it was not considered important to marry or to be industrious. Paul had to face the situation. He rebuked the loafers, saying that if a man did not work he should not eat. He emphasized the sacredness of the relationship of the home. By the time the pastoral epistles were written, the "Second Coming" was no longer receiving undue emphasis. The church had settled down for a long pull. Its organization was being perfected; the qualifications of its officers were being defined; a form of ordination was in use; and its beliefs were crystallizing into a faith to be defended. In other words, the church was becoming aware of its place and purpose in the world.

Here we can unite. The field is the world, and we are all in it. The world needs redemption and we can proclaim the way of life in Christ. The kingdom of God must be established, and whatever our views as to how this should be brought about, we can look upon each other as sincere, and in the spirit of love realize that we are workers together with God toward the one great end.

So the least common denominators for Christian unity turn out to be faith and love; faith in God and our fellow Christians; love for him and for all mankind. The method of operation in solving the problems involved is discovered to be, "faith working through love."

But what of the other abiding factor—hope? As we look into the future, may we expect, as well as desire, the success of our efforts for a united Christendom? Probably not, if we have in view an organic union which would set up a great ecclesiastical machine, in the establishment of which there would be insurmountable difficulties, and in the administration of which, there would be grave dangers.

If, however, the object for which we strive is a unity of the spirit among all Christians, a fellowship of devotion to the establishment of the kingdom of God, we may confidently look forward to the day when the unity of the followers of Christ will be the greatest witness to his sovereignty, and the greatest power for the establishment of his kingdom.

The recent ecumenical conferences have been cheering harbingers of the better day. In the preface to the American edition of the Report of the Oxford Conference, Henry Smith Leiper says, "Men and women went there thinking of *the churches,* and came away thinking and talking about *the Church* invisible, eternal, spiritual—more real than the broken ranks of those who call themselves Christians, and forget, when they use the word, that there can be only one family of the Lord, however many earthly homes the family may inhabit." At the conference there was no

attempt to compel conformity to any particular point of view, or to cover up the manifest differences. According to Doctor Leiper, the spirit of Oxford seems to have been, "If we have differences of conviction and of practical judgment, let us talk about them and let us try to understand them. 'If we still must differ, let us differ in love and let each attack in his own way the common enemies—hate, violence, selfishness, and unrighteousness.'" [3] The same spirit was manifested at Edinburgh.

The mission fields present a challenging example to the home churches of the values of Christian unity. The various National Christian Councils and the International Missionary Council have rendered outstanding service in promoting this movement in mission lands, but many of the native Christians feel that it must be carried much further. At the meeting of the International Missionary Council, held in Madras in December, 1938, the representatives of the younger churches who were included in the section on Cooperation and Unity, presented a unanimous statement in which, while acknowledging the fact of "spiritual unity" and recording "with great thankfulness all the signs of cooperation and understanding that are increasingly seen in various directions," they declared, "Visible and organic union must be our goal."

The Conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh made provision for the continuation of their work through a "World Council of Churches," whose responsibilities should include such matters as carrying on the work of the Faith and Order and the Life and Work movement, helping the churches to act together, promoting cooperation in study, furthering the growth of ecumenical consciousness in the churches, and calling world conferences on specific subjects as occasion requires. This Council is in process of organization, and will doubtless begin to function as soon as the necessary representatives are appointed by the various constituent church bodies.

And so the plans have been drawn and the machinery is under construction to make the united power of the Christian Church available to a world which sorely needs redemption. Yet all this will mean little unless local churches and their individual members are ecumenical in spirit. To the individual Christian this must mean the breaking down of the barriers which separate him from his fellows. Pride of race, privilege, position, and conviction must give way to the love which vaunteth not itself and is not puffed up. Mutual understanding must be developed through honest effort to get the point of view of others, and acknowledgment of their right to hold their own opinions. To the slogan "Agreed to differ, but

[3] From *The Oxford Conference (Official Report)*. By permission of Willett, Clark & Company, publishers.

resolved to love" must be added "and determined to unite." When the rank and file of church members realize that the body of Christ is being paralyzed by its unnecessary divisions, and make up their minds to support the efforts that are being made to heal these breaches, Christianity will again be on the march.

To the local congregation comes the opportunity of giving living witness to the workability of the principles underlying church unity. The local body has in miniature the same problems as the church universal. Some of its members are liberal and some are conservative in their attitude toward Christian faith; some believe that the pulpit should be the center of the service of worship, while others would push the pulpit aside in favor of the altar; some advocate constant self-denial; others insist upon freedom to enjoy all of God's good things; some would limit the activities of the church to a spiritual ministry; others would include social service. These differences sometimes split churches; but when, in spite of them, a body of Christians can keep "the spirit of unity in the bonds of peace," and in addition, play fair with its neighboring churches, avoid questionable methods of raising funds, pay its honest debts, treat its employees with consideration, and take a firm stand for the right in every public moral question, it is making a real contribution toward meeting the greatest need of the Christian Church today—unity.

The ground of a certain husbandman brought forth abundantly, but his joy was not full, inasmuch as he had a contention with his neighbor as to where the hedge should be planted between their fields. Moreover they did not worship in the same synagogue, neither were their noses of the same shape. And it came to pass, on a certain day as they went to their fields, they met each other and spake roughly the one to the other. And they cast dirt and stones upon each other until their raiment was soiled and they were sore with wounds, insomuch that they spent many days and much wealth waiting on physicians and fullers, if haply they might be healed and their raiment cleansed. And when they came to themselves, they said, "To what profit hath been our quarrel, for while we have been busy here and there, our servants have been idle and the grasshopper and the canker-worm have devoured our harvests." And the same hour they arose and sought until they found each other. And they spake with kindly voices and confessed their fault, the one to the other. And they made a covenant to be friends and to help each other against their common foes. Then was there peace between these houses, their servants labored with zeal, their barns were filled to bursting, and their hearts rejoiced in mutual fellowship.

BOOK REVIEWS

HOME BUILDERS OF TOMORROW. Warren D. Bowman. Elgin (Ill.): The Elgin Press. 1938. $1.00.

THIS is a book which leaders of discussion groups among young people and young people themselves will read with profit. The author, formerly head of the Department of Education and Psychology at Juniata College, and now pastor of the Washington City Church of the Brethren in Washington, D. C., has presented a well-balanced approach to the whole question of the relationship of the sexes before and after marriage. He has presented the problems of young people and offered a Christian solution to them. A helpful bibliography is included in the book.

The main divisions of the book are concerned with "Forming of Friendships," "The Choice of a Mate," "Courtship," "The Engagement," and "Entering Upon Marriage." The reviewer has already used the book in discussion groups, and has had the satisfaction of knowing that its practical wisdom is appreciated.

PAUL MILTON HUMPHREYS.

THE PHARISEES (2 Vols.). Louis Finkelstein. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America. 1938. Pp. 793. $7.50.

THIS two-volume treatise on the Pharisees is a scholarly study of the sociological background of the faith of that particular religious sect. Louis Finkelstein is well qualified to write on this subject as he is Provost and Solomon Schechter Professor of Theology in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

These volumes are part of the Morris Loeb series explaining Jewish thought and history. Christians as well as Jews will find much of interest and information in this work. Perhaps we are amazed at the author's statement that "Fully half of the world adheres to Pharisaic faiths; only one-fourth as many people follow Confucius, and less than one-sixth as many are Buddhists." In the light of this statement we should certainly give more time and study to the Pharisaic root.

One of the valuable features of the work is the fact that approximately 125 pages in Volume 2 are given to Notes, Bibliographies, and Indices. This makes the volume especially valuable to students of the background of Christianity in Pharisaic thought.

ROLAND M. TRAVER.

WORLD COMMUNISM. F. Borkenau. New York: W. W. Norton. 1939. Pp. 442. $3.75.

THIS is a history of the Communist International, usually known as the Third International. Therefore the author is concerned primarily with describing Communism abroad rather than Communism in Russia, but he gives enough of the story of the revolution in Russia to explain the connections between happenings there and the activities of the Comintern in the rest of Europe and in China. The author is an ex-communist, but is judicial and scholarly and his work is thoroughly documented. Checking on the section on the Chinese revolution, I found him extremely well-informed and accurate. The vacillating and opportunistic policies of the Comintern are recorded, and the reasons why the hopes that the Russian revolution would be

followed by Communist uprisings in other countries have been disappointed are explained. The author thinks that Russia is incapable of leading revolutions outside of Russia because the Communist government has always identified Russian methods and necessities too closely with foreign ones. In the history of the Comintern there have been three phases: "During the first period the Comintern was mainly an instrument to bring about revolution (abroad); during the second period it was mainly an instrument in Russian factional struggles; during the present period it is mainly an instrument of Russian foreign policy. . . The evolution of the Comintern, and partly even that of Russia, are due to the fact that the international proletarian revolution, after which the Bolsheviks originally hunted, was a phantom."

GORDON POTEAT.

WE DIDN'T ASK UTOPIA. Harry and Rebecca Timbres. New York: Prentice-Hall. 1939. Pp. 290. $2.50.

DR. HARRY TIMBRES, a 1921 graduate of Haverford College, met Rebecca Janney, the daughter of a Quaker physician, in Poland where they were engaged in famine relief under the direction of the American Friends Service Committee. Their work took them into Russia where they became deeply interested in the Russian attempt to set up a new society. They were married in Danzig. Upon their return to the United States, Harry entered Johns Hopkins University where he took his M. D. in 1928. Subsequently they went to India where for five years they were associated with Tagore's settlement in Santineketan, working at malaria prevention. But their original contact with Russia influenced them strongly to return there to share in the work of remaking that great nation.

Doctor Timbres was greatly interested in the experiment of socialized medicine, and was anxious to study it at first hand. This book contains the journals of both Doctor Timbres and his wife, written during the year from June, 1936, to June, 1937, when they lived in a malaria-infested forest-swamp region where a new wood-pulp industry was being established. Though they did not think of themselves as missionaries, this is as truly a story of Christian missions as any other that has been written. They did not preach, but they practiced the spirit of Christ, and Harry laid down his life after one brief year of service and is buried there in Marbumstroy. Many of his Russian medical associates were motivated by much the same spirit as his own. The reading of these diaries will deepen understanding of Russia and its people.

GORDON POTEAT.

PLATO TODAY. R. H. S. Crossman. New York: Oxford University Press. 1939. Pp. 311. $2.50.

MR. CROSSMAN, formerly a tutor in philosophy at Oxford University, is a scholar who knows Plato. He is also thoroughly versed in contemporary politics, being a member of the British Labor Party engaged in worker's education. In this book he uses Plato as a foil for a criticism of present-day political movements—Communism, Fascism, and Democracy. To read the book is to gain a fresh insight into Plato's thought and, at the same time, a clearer realization of the issues which modern politics face. Despite the title of his famous book on government, Plato was an advocate of benevolent dictatorship. He assumed that most men are naturally so deficient that they are incapable of self-government; that there are men, however,

who possess potentially such wisdom that absolute government may safely be entrusted to them; but these potential governors will mostly be found, not among the *hoi polloi,* but among the "well-born." "Platonism," says Mr. Crossman, "is the rational apologia for reaction. A military despot in Greece, a Roman emperor, a medieval monarch, a renaissance prince, or a modern dictator, and even a modern conservative in a democratic state, can all justify themselves as Platonists."

At the same time Plato's criticisms of democracy are not to be lightly dismissed. Democracy is weakened today, first, by being defended for ulterior purposes by men who are not real believers in democracy, and second, by ignorance on the part of the masses as to what democracy really involves. True democracy springs from the un-Platonic but Christian conception of personality and this Christian basis is essential to its success. "The true democrat must start with the assumption that the world has still to be made democratic, so the Christian must assume that it is still pagan, despite the existence of 'democratic institutions and Christian churches.' Only a revolutionary Christianity can hope to prevail today." GORDON POTEAT.

BIOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF. William O. Greenwood. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1939. Pp. 192. $1.75.

A BIOLOGIST who is also a Christian argues against the contention that modern scientific knowledge precludes belief in God. For many this will seem like whipping a dead horse, but there are probably a great many persons who still fear that they cannot be scientific and Christian at the same time. Doctor Greenwood's essay ought to remove that fear. When it comes to convincing the materialist, that is another matter. The author speaks of "coercive facts," implying that the facts compel his interpretation. But that is just the point at issue, and one's *ipse dixit* does not settle the matter. I have no quarrel with the author's faith in God, for I share it. But I do protest that Christian apologists, if they are attempting to convince atheists and not simply confirm the faith of believers, must be more careful as to their logic. They must not minimize the strength of the opposition. For example, is it really pertinent to suggest that the new theory of matter "destroys the foundation for a philosophy of materialism"? The essence of atheism as a philosophy does not depend upon some particular description of matter, and a man can be a "materialist" and still accept the "immateriality" of matter—he can still deny any control of natural processes by a self-conscious Being whom theologians call God.

It is a confusion of terms to equate this "immateriality" with spirit—"Their (atoms) immateriality is so striking that we may look upon them as spiritual in nature rather than material" (P. 39). It is positively dangerous for Christian thinking to suggest that the unbelieving scientist objects to the theism of the Christian because he has an antipathy for mystery. Does faith in God depend upon the mysterious gaps in our knowledge that are as yet unfilled? The obvious retort is that God is as mysterious as the gap, and many gaps have been filled by human discovery. These may also be filled. If that happens, will Christians have to surrender their faith?

Christian faith in God does not depend upon the cogency of the argument of design, though some of us may feel that nature has its intimations. It depends rather on the acceptance of a certain way of life. The main point that can be asserted today with reference to the question of science and religion is that science cannot pronounce a negative for Christian faith nor an affirmative for atheism which is also

a faith, and *vice versa.* Faith involves an interpretation of the facts and a hope which goes beyond physical facts. A Christian is one who dares to risk his all in favor of one interpretation and for an invincible hope.

GORDON POTEAT.

THE SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER. J. Leonard Hodgson (Ed.). New York: The Macmillan Company. 1938. Pp. 386. $2.50.

THIS report of the Edinburgh Conference of 1937 has more than passing value for it contains material to which all those who are concerned with the promotion of Christian unity must constantly refer. It reveals the complicity of the problems which divide Christian groups, the intransigeance of certain types of ecclesiastical thought, and thereby warns against facile optimism. But it also demonstrates the remarkable advances that have been made toward fellowship and understanding between Christians of widely differing traditions, and thereby prevents undue pessimism. It is significant that Greek Orthodox and Quakers should be able to unite in a declaration such as that on page 235: "The Spirit speaks by whomsoever He wills. The call to bear witness to the Gospel and to declare God's will does not come to the ordained ministry alone." Even when the Dean of Chichester Cathedral declares that he personally hates any idea of a united Christendom without one form of government and thinks it impossible, it is not without hope that he voted to include a statement of the point of view which he abominates in the final report.

The debates which are recorded rather fully give an unusual opportunity to observe the mental processes of Christians who have been brought up differently. Addresses by representatives of different communions on their spiritual experience within their own churches which were given on Sunday evenings serve the same purpose. The address by Dr. Harold Phillips, which created somewhat of a sensation when he presented the Baptist point of view, is given in full.

The conference suggested that theological seminaries should provide courses in ecumenical Christianity, designed to acquaint students sympathetically with the views of the different church groups. This volume should be one of the first to put on reference for such a course. A series of sermons or prayer-meeting talks on the five reports of the sections would be of great value in widening the sympathies and horizons of the people in the churches.

GORDON POTEAT.

FORM CRITICISM: ITS VALUES AND LIMITATIONS. E. Basil Redlich. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1939. Pp. 209. $2.25.

CANON REDLICH has provided one more useful handbook for those who would tread the paths of form criticism. The first chapter gives a brief history of the rise and aims of this discipline and rightly stresses its debt to Wrede and his view of the Messianic secret. The second chapter is a full and admirable exposition of the underlying assumptions of the form critics, with many cautions and warnings. His chief criticism, which echoes through the whole volume, is against the assumption that the vital factor giving rise to the forms is to be seen almost exclusively in the practical needs and interests of the early Christian community—to provide material for missionary teaching among the gentiles (Dibelius), or the outgrowth of controversies in the early church (Bultmann). Both of these scholars, he believes, magnify by too many diameters the creative ability of this primitive community, thereby neglecting that of Jesus himself. Rather, he would say, the practical

interests of the Christian community *preserved* the tradition which had been handed down. Thus he qualifies what he regards as unwarranted skepticism which denies all historical value to contexts and the historical contribution of the framers of the gospels themselves. In so far as he protests against seeing "Mark" simply an editor, and a rather stupid one at that, I quite agree. I find myself, however, far from being convinced that Mark's biographical, chronological, or geographical contributions evidence any real dependence upon eye-witnesses or throw any light upon the days of the ministry, however important they have become in developing Christianity.

Another criticism is against the cumbersome and opaque nomenclature. Redlich adopts a far simpler list: apothegm-stories (roughly corresponding to Bultmann's "apothegms" and Dibelius' "paradigms"); miracle-stories (Dibelius' "novellen"); sayings and parables; the Passion narration, which, he agrees, proves a real exception to the rest of the material, through having had from the earliest days a connected structure; and what he calls formless stories. Apothegm-stories do have structural form and can profitably be classified and analyzed as such. Other stories, however, allow no such treatment. To speak of them as "legends" and "myths" is, at least in English, unwise, for it prejudges them as unhistorical. As a matter of fact, since these stories—about thirty in number—possess no common characteristics, at least in so far as literary form is concerned, they are actually outside the province of form-criticism. The only real contribution form-criticism has made to their study has been the recognition that they circulated in the main as independent units.

The remaining five chapters of the book discuss in more detail these five groups: apothegm-stories, miracle-stories, sayings and parables, the Passion narrative, and formless stories. The careful student will find these chapters well worth his attention although he will probably not see eye to eye with the author on all points.

If one were to apply labels, I suppose Canon Redlich would receive that interesting designation—a reasonably liberal conservative. He recognizes candidly the presence of legend and the occasional intrusion of the unhistorical, and he is not averse to a bit of Paulus-like rationalism; but he seems to feel a bit happier when he can discern reasons for considering the material in question historical. And, it may be remarked, he is consequently rather happier than I could be. For example, the story of Jesus in the Temple at the age of twelve is probably a true story; the story of the visit of Jesus in Nazareth is "fuller in Luke than in Mark" and it is "probable that Luke obtained the additional materials from the family of Jesus." The majority, if not all, of the eight formless stories in John (including the Visit of Nicodemus, the Woman at the Well, the Feet-Washing) have an historical fact as the foundation of each. Yet, although he protests occasionally against what he regards the reckless and sweeping skepticism of Bultmann and at times against that of the conservative Dibelius, he does it with a complete lack of bitterness, innuendo, or mud-slinging. But this is, of course, only to remark that he is a scholar and a gentleman. The book is interesting reading. This remark is in itself news.

Morton S. Enslin.

God in Our Street. George Stewart. New York: Abingdon Press. 1939. Pp. 216. $2.00.

Doctor Stewart is minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Stamford, Connecticut. He has won a large place for a broad scholarship and also for a broad humanitarianism. The latter is the more significant for the book under review. *God in Our*

Street is a theology for preachers; it is the author's own working theology. After all that is what we preachers need, namely, a theology which we can preach and which is able to sustain us in our total ministry. The author, so to speak, has extracted the juice from the best technical thought of today and offers it to the minister who thirsts both to be abreast of the times and to be helpful to his people. The gist of the matter is in these two hundred pages.

The volume is divided into three parts: I, God as Creator; II, Jesus Christ: God as the Word Made Flesh; III, The Holy Spirit: God as Inspiration. The last-named section seems to be the most original, clarifying, and helpful.

W. R. McNutt.

Is This Religion? Frank B. Fagerburg. Philadelphia: The Judson Press. 1939. Pp. 191. $1.50.

Doctor Fagerburg is a young man, gifted preacher, and beloved pastor of the First Baptist Church, Los Angeles. So far as books are concerned he is a new voice. His messages are rare in their simple beauty, their profound grip on the realities of our religion, and the spunky wine of contemporaneousness. In this volume, *Is This Religion?*, for the most part he is asking and answering certain questions emergent in our time: "Is Religion a Bargain?"; "Is Religion a Gamble?"; "Is Religion an Escape?"; "Is Religion an Opiate?"; "Is Religion Wishful Thinking?"; "Is Religion a Prop for the Weak?" and "Is Religion Load or Lift?" To these he adds: "The Lift in the Load"; "First-Hand and Second-Hand Religion"; "Religion According to Jesus"; "Religion's Promise"; "Religion, Prayer, and Plodders"; and "Practising Immortality." Such a book is capable of a fine work of clarification for many ministers, and of being a veritable boon to a generation of young people vexed by such questions. My wish that it may have a very wide reading is really a prayer.

W. R. McNutt.

The Church School Superintendent. Philip Cowell Jones. New York: Abingdon Press. 1939. Pp. 112. $1.00.

Here is another volume in the series, "Guides to Christian Leadership," of which Dr. Paul H. Vieth is editor. The author is an associate minister in the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church of New York City, having special responsibility for its program of education. The book is intensely practical, having grown out of actual experience. For this reason it should prove both an inspiration and a treasure of wisdom for church school superintendents and others charged with leadership responsibility. The author deals with the work of the executive officer of the church school as related to organization, courses of study, the discovery, enlistment, training and supervision of teachers, the whole program of worship, the keeping of school records, the maintenance of an enthusiastic interest throughout the school, and numerous other matters concerning which every alert superintendent wishes to read.

W. R. McNutt.

Revolutionary Christianity. Sherwood Eddy. Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co. 1939. Pp. 229. $2.00.

The author, Dr. Sherwood Eddy, is widely known in America; and all who know him can testify that he is a man who seriously lives the Christian religion

which he professes. A biographer would be compelled to reveal a man in whose life religion has always been an evolutionary force and sometimes a revolutionary force.

Approximately the first half of this book is devoted to the origins, development, content, and meaning of Christianity. The latter portion shifts attention to the revolutionary nature of Jesus and his religion when applied to either individual living or social conditioning.

Doctor Eddy thinks that the tap-root of the evils of our time sinks itself into an economic order which the religion of Jesus Christ sharply challenges, and that his religion calls upon its devotees to become economic revolutionaries. The titles given to the concluding four chapters give the clue to the author's thought: "Evolution or Revolution," "The Present World Situation," "Christianity in the Modern World," and "Religion in a Revolutionary Age."

Sherwood Eddy is always stimulating because he writes out of honesty of mind and depth of conviction. This book will reveal the meaning of that sentence.

W. R. McNutt.

The Christian Faith in a Day of Crisis. Charles S. Macfarland, General Secretary Emeritus, The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company. Pp. 226. $1.50.

This volume contains reviews of thirty contemporaneous books. The writer is amply provided with the qualities necessary to produce such a work successfully. Except in the last chapter, where he offers "A Synthesis of Contemporary Thought," he has not aimed to give his own opinion, but to indicate what the authors whose books he reviews are "thinking and saying."

The volumes discussed are not considered in haphazard order, but are arranged in significant classifications, such as, "Types of Modern Philosophy," "Theologies of Crisis," "The Case for Liberalism," "Empiricism Holds Its Ground," "Unity in a Day of Crisis." In the list of authors appear such familiar names as W. M. Horton, Nicholas Berdyaev, Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, Rufus M. Jones, George W. Richards, and William Adams Brown.

The hard-pressed minister and the busy layman, who wish to keep abreast of current religious thought, find great help in good book reviews. The current volume is of especial value to them, as the author has sufficient space to give a comprehensive summary of each work reviewed. It is a worthy companion of his *Contemporary Christian Thought* (1936), and *Trends of Christian Thinking* (1937).

Rittenhouse Neisser.

One Generation and Another. Robert Russell Wicks. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1939. Pp. vii, 191. $1.50.

This is a most refreshing book. Tired of hearing of the abnormal homes, and believing that many homes have achieved happiness and richness of life, Doctor Wicks sets out to examine the principles involved in the construction of normal, wholesome homes. Such principles as "respect for difference," and "a strong social obligation" are as important as the underlying quality of "refined sensitivity" which can be found in all successful homes.

There are many specific suggestions as to practical, worth-while things at

the command of parents which can be used to knit together the family of growing children and produce lasting effects for good. Out of the home come such "early religious impressions" as "a sense of sacredness," "a certain rigidity of discipline," "a feeling of oneness with other lives," "a winning power as contrasted with the power of compulsion." From the home there also comes our often unspoken belief as to "what life is like."

The final chapter deals with three great perplexities: first, the "impression that fulfilment of desire is what gives life significance and value"; secondly, we are part of a group, yet we must live our own lives; and thirdly, the old conflict between what we ought to do and what we can do.

One Generation and Another renews our faith in the possibility of making splendid homes, and rearing children of high calibre. Its idealism is founded upon the experiences of many such homes. For those who are searching for some guide here is a book of great value.

RONALD V. WELLS.

THE CLUE TO HISTORY. John Macmurray. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1939. Pp. 243. $2.50.

IT IS almost impossible to review this book adequately. It is so packed with startling ideas and brilliant interpretations that a review befitting its interest would almost require a reprinting of the book itself.

Not that one may always agree with Professor Macmurray; but his profound insight, scintillating analysis, and happy style hold the reader captive. His thesis that the history of Europe, and therefore of Western Civilization, is the history of Christianity, leads to many a paradox, which, however, must generally be accepted. Thus many of our difficulties in understanding the developments within Christianity and its effect upon the world life are resolved.

We have failed to read Christianity aright because of our failure to recognize a constant "duality" which accompanies it. In the first place, we are too prone to approach its study from the total view-point of today. But "Christianity is the act of Jesus upon the world . . . it is the intention to realize the universal community which is the reality of human life." Consequently, "The Jewish rejection of Christianity was a rejection of their own reality" and "Their determination to maintain an exclusive nationalism . . . achieved its opposite."

Another "duality" is the fact that Jesus, a spiritual genius, lived in the real world of Roman dominance, concerning Jewish relationship to which he had to teach. He refused to countenance the use of power against Rome but could use force against the money-changers. Why? Because in the latter there was moral purpose which was lacking in the former. At least that much difference. Christianity was a new culture, new convictions of human relations that steadily revolutionized society, overthrowing the ancient ways which gave power to the upper classes. But when Rome accepted Christianity then Christianity—more truly, the Church—accepted Rome whereby the upper classes maintained their power, a compromise having been effected. Thus the Church is the official religion of the governing classes, "which dualism Christianity denies."

The difference between Eastern and Western Christianity—theological as distinct from institutional—is suggestive. Theology is contemplation, an effort to escape realism, an attempt to explain rather than transform the world. The human need

for action is provided in theology by dramatization, apocalypticism, imaginative depictions of the eternal conflict in the spiritual realm between the mighty forces of good and evil—heedless of the actual warfare in the sphere of this mundane world.

R. E. E. HARKNESS.

THE RELIGION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. Ernest William Parsons. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1939. Pp. 278. $2.50.

THIS is a book which, I think, ministers and all other students of the New Testament will find most helpful. It has the right approach to the study of the Book that is the source of our Christian religion and church, and thereby eliminates many of the so-called problems with which we have formerly dealt.

Doctor Parsons, who is Professor of New Testament Interpretation in the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, recognizes that the books of the New Testament have been written at various times to meet the religious difficulties of those varying periods, and that the authors have been influenced by the developing religious conceptions of the passing generations. Thus we are immediately faced with the fact that in the Gospels we have the religious views and way of life of Jesus, a young Jewish prophet, who lived in the troubled days of the Roman dominance of his people and at the same time the religious reflections and conceptions of the authors who wrote at a much later period when the effect of his teaching had reached not alone his own people but members of other races as well. Were any of the authors of the Gospels as we have them numbered among the Apostles?

So in Paul we have a Jew in all the intensity of his religion but a Greek in culture who has also come under the powerful appeal of this new interpretation of Judaism to which he joyously responds, as the answer of his long-troubled conscience. His spiritual insights and profound experiences and convictions have a revolutionary effect upon the religious conceptions of the other authors and disciples of Jesus, by which Christianity becomes a new religion, conveying within it strains from both Judaism and certain of the Greek religions molded and fashioned by the impact of new forces in the social structures of the succeeding decades. Later writers carry Jesus into their own periods making him the spiritual dynamic by which they master the troubled world of their particular day.

Doctor Parsons has shown us that textual criticism is not enough for a creative understanding of the New Testament; nor is the so-called *historical* approach. There must be the *social* whereby the actual conditions, needs, culture, and aspirations of the people of the time and place are clearly recognized. Thus the Book becomes not a negative but a positive source for the knowledge of the religious life and spiritual needs of people of all ages, including our own.

R. E. E. HARKNESS.

THIS BUSINESS OF LIVING. L. W. Grensted, D.D. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1939. Pp. 187. $1.75.

THIS convincing and helpful volume comes from the pen of the Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion in the University of Oxford. Without fear or favor, he uncovers the serious problems which complicate life. Conventional solutions for these are shown to be inadequate in view of the real question which must be faced, "How shall we be other than what we are?" Religion is offered as

the answer and Christianity is presented as the form of religion which can make us "free to be ourselves at our best" and enable us to "help others to that same freedom."

The gateway to this better life is the "new birth," but "the path lies through the very heart of those problems that have been too hard for us, and there is no way round." Without trespassing on the field of the psychotherapist, some of his discoveries are used as guides toward attainment of "better and more human lives." The author believes that all problems, personal, social, racial, and international, can find satisfactory solution only in terms of "creative love." "We cannot win our way to freedom alone." The Christian way is "the way of the cross."

"This business of living" is one in which we are all engaged. Most of us are bungling the job badly. Its problems are described, analyzed, and discussed on every side. Here is a volume which presents them frankly, faces them fearlessly, and offers practical counsel for their solution.

RITTENHOUSE NEISSER.

BOOK NOTICES

CENTURION. Edwin McNeill Poteat. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1939. Pp. 182. $2.00.

Centurion is another inspiring and powerful variation upon the gospel narrative. With real skill and fine poetic art, Doctor Poteat has enriched the interpretive literature dealing with the life of Jesus and the lives of those who lived with the Master.

As in *The Terrible Meek,* the strong contrast is drawn between duty and love. It is the figure of Christ under the cross that brings light to Marcus the Centurion and resolves the conflicts of his own thoughts.

This is a poem whose lines and thoughts, though strong and vivid, are refined by a beauty which is hard to describe. To some the striking elements will overshadow this beauty. This is a book which is well worth reading.

RONALD V. WELLS.

AMOS. B. A. Copass. Nashville: Broadman Press. 1939. Pp. 99. 75 cents.

THIS is a brief study on the prophet Amos designed to relate his work and teaching to modern needs. Unfortunately the prophet is pressed into the mold of a "plan of salvation" type of theology which he would hardly be able to recognize as his own. He suffers a loss of vitality thereby; indeed it would be better for most people just to read *Amos* without the commentary. George Adam Smith's essay on Amos, published in 1896, is more pertinent to 1939 than this study.

GORDON POTEAT.

NEW TESTAMENT WINDOWS. F. DeLand Leete. New York: Funk and Wagnalls. 1939. Pp. 150. $1.50.

A SERIES of word studies in the Greek New Testament designed to be suggestive to sermon makers. The selection of words which are analyzed is more or less at random, the divisions being based upon parts of speech rather than upon any historical sequence. It is in brief the same sort of study as that found *in extenso* in A. T. Robertson's word studies in the New Testament.

GORDON POTEAT.

PSYCHIATRY FOR PASTORS, STUDENTS, NURSES. Jacob D. Mulder, M.D. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans. 1939. Pp. 175. $1.50.

DOCTOR MULDER is superintendent of the Christian Psychopathic Hospital located near Grand Rapids, Michigan. He writes as a practising psychiatrist therefore. The book cannot be praised for literary excellence but rather for content. In reality it is a text-book on the many types and varieties of mental diseases: their causes, symptoms, treatment, etc. The unique feature of the book, and hence its chief contribution, is a very generous use of case records from the author's hospital files. It is a text-book, therefore, forcefully and meaningfully illustrated.

W. R. MCNUTT.

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